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the dessau bauhaus building

1926-1999

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**The Dessau
Bauhaus Building
1926 – 1999**

Bauhaus Dessau Foundation
Margret Kentgens-Craig
(eds.)



72 (Gropius) Des

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window of the south side of the workshop wing,
photograph by Lucia Moholy,
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Contents

Hardt-Walther Hämer

6 Foreword

Margret Kentgens-Craig

7 Introduction

Karin Wilhelm

— 10 Seeing – walking – thinking

The Bauhaus building design

Robin Krause

28 Marcel Breuer's early tubular steel furniture

On furnishing the Bauhaus building

Lutz Schöbe

42 Black and white or colour?

Spatial design in the Bauhaus building

Margret Kentgens-Craig

66 Art and politics: no “new unity”

Klaus von Beyme

86 The Bauhaus as a political metaphor

Marie Neumüllers

102 “... our own space around us”

Life in the Bauhaus

Walter Scheiffele

112 “You must go there” – contemporary reactions

Wolfgang Thöner

122 A symbol of hope, or of failure?

The Bauhaus building in publications

Julius Posener

— 134 A visit to the Dessau Bauhaus

Ralf Körner

142 Uses of the Bauhaus building, 1926 – 1989

Wolfgang Paul

160 Renovation 1976

Marieke Kuipers

174 The Bauhaus and the World Heritage List

Berthold Burkhardt

186 The Conservation of Modern Monuments

Renovating the Bauhaus building

203 About the authors

205 Acknowledgements

206 Index of names

Hardt-Walther Hämer

Foreword

6

"Let us together will, devise and create a new form of building for the future, that will be everything in one: architecture and sculpture and painting, that will one day ascend towards heaven as a crystal symbol of a new faith that is to come" (Walter Gropius, 1919, Manifesto and Programme for the Staatliches Bauhaus in Weimar). Today we are becoming increasingly aware of this element of the Dessau Bauhaus as a built manifesto for mastering our own disjointed social developments by mobilizing civil culture.

The great celebration for the completion of the Bauhaus was held on 4 December 1926. 70 years after this celebration it was declared a World Heritage Monument. UNESCO has identified this Modern monument, together with the masters' houses in Dessau and the Bauhaus sites in Weimar, as having the "outstanding universal value" that requires special protection under the "International World Heritage Convention" of 1972.

This decision was not just acknowledging the building stock. It also particularly stressed the educational ideas, and the ideas for building design and town planning, that emerged from 1919 to 1933 – which included the Dessau years of the Hochschule für Gestaltung. The architectural evidence, among which the Bauhaus building occupies a special place, makes a far more powerful statement and has greater charisma than all the written statements, which Bauhaus members were never especially reluctant to produce.

Preserving and interpreting the Bauhaus building and its ideas is one of the noblest purposes of the present Bauhaus Dessau Foundation. I am pleased, along with all those working in the various departments of the Foundation, that this book will for the first time provide a comprehensive monograph on this extraordinary monument of architectural history and Modernism. The portraits and analyses in this publication gain additional significance for us because they appear in the context of the full renovation of the Bauhaus

building, which we want to control carefully and which today is very directly experienced by all staff members and visitors.

Most cordial thanks go to all the authors who have presented the many facets of this unique building and to all those who have made it possible for this book to be published by years of preparation, and especially to Dr. Margret Kentgens-Craig, who as head of the department Sammlung agreed to edit the book for the Foundation.

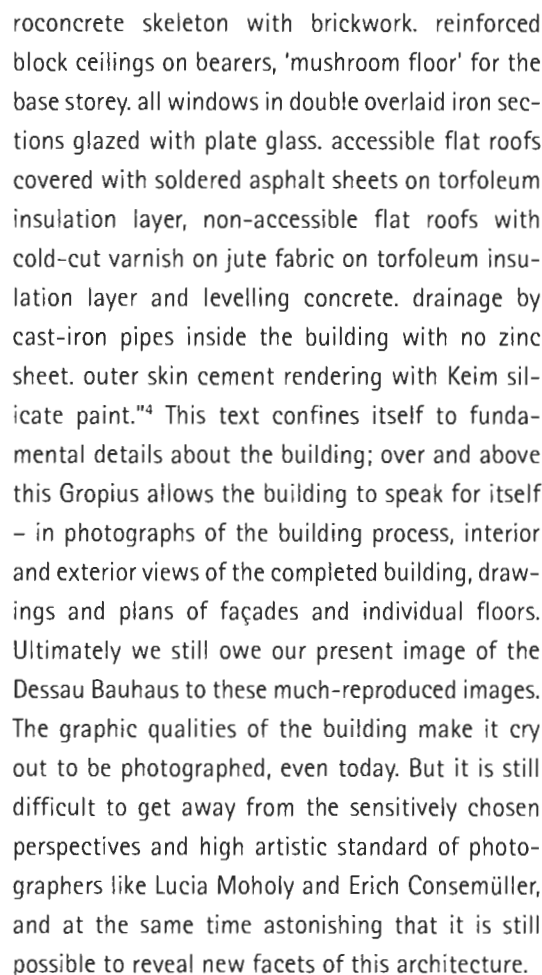
Margret Kentgens-Craig

Introduction

"The ultimate end of all artistic activity is building!"¹ There is no question that architecture was intended to be the heart of the Bauhaus's creative programme from the outset. Reality in Weimar never achieved this ideal; they never got any further than a few experiments and one realized building, the Haus am Horn. It was not until 1927, in Dessau, when a building department was established, that architecture acquired an appropriate position in the curriculum, and only from 1928, when Hannes Meyer replaced Walter Gropius, were architectural commissions that came into the Bauhaus implemented as Bauhaus commissions. Until then all the buildings came out of Gropius's private office, partly, as in the case of the Bauhaus building, in co-operation with the Bauhaus workshops. The Bauhaus buildings that emerged here in the second half of the twenties included masters' houses for Gropius, Moholy-Nagy/Feininger, Mücke/Schlemmer and Klee/Kandinsky (1925/26), the municipal labour office (1927-29) and the Törten housing estate (1926-28) by Gropius,² the co-operative store (1928) by Gropius and Carl Fieger, the house (1926/27) and the Kornhaus (1929/30) by Fieger, the Access-gallery houses (1929/30) by Meyer as director, the Steel house (1926/27) by Georg Mücke and Richard Paulick and finally, as the outstanding achievement and embodiment of the school's programme, the Bauhaus building.

Architect Walter Gropius describes the building in his book *bauhausbauten dessau*, 1930, as follows: "the bauhaus building was commissioned by the town of dessau and building work started in autumn 1925; it was completed after a year and opened in december 1926. the whole building covers an area of about 2630 sqm and has a cubic capacity of approx. 32450 cbm. it cost 902500 marks or 27.8 marks per cbm volume including all additional costs. fixtures and fittings cost 126200 marks."³ About the materials and construction of the complex as a whole he says: "fer-





The building was a fragile structure from the outset, susceptible to weather and other impositions. Not least responsible for this was the architect's decision to realize his formal and aesthetic visions with 19th-century building methods and materials, thus exposing himself to risks in term of building technology. The building's history is full of damage, repairs, modifications and remodelling. A comprehensive reconstruction was finally undertaken in 1976, and this is described in the contribution by Wolfgang Paul, who was the architect in charge at the time. He reminds us that in large parts of the building we are no longer dealing with the original, but a replica. In the meantime it has become clear that a comprehensive, general renovation is needed, appropriate in terms of monument preservation, because of new damage, faults, wear and the need for modernization arising from the working requirements of the users, the Bauhaus Dessau Foundation and the Fachhochschule Anhalt. This has been in preparation since 1997, and is intended for completion by 2001, taking the building's examined condition into consideration, and with the greatest possible care for the historical building stock. The measures planned include removing structural damage to the façade and support structure, renovation of the interior to the extent that this is compatible with use, restoring the original sequence of rooms, renewing and modernizing worn-out technical equipment and creating exterior features. Marieke Kuipers's contribution makes the case that the building's outstanding significance as part of the world cultural heritage should be the quality criterion for all the work. Berthold Burckhardt's article addresses the difficulties of dealing with Modern buildings whose inherent claim to timelessness and flawless maintenance bring them up against the limits of traditional monument preservation and require new treatment methods. Ralf Körner explains how the rebuilding that has taken place over the years resulted partly from a constant sequence of new uses after the Hochschule für Gestaltung was closed. Margret Kentgens-Craig looks at the fate of the Bauhaus under the Weimar Republic, the Third Reich, the immediate post-war period, the German

Democratic Republic and the years around the fall of the Wall as a story of alternate attention, acceptance, rejection and political instrumentalization. Klaus von Beyme analyses the Bauhaus as a political metaphor from the point of view of the school community; his essay shows how the institution was gradually eroded in the co-operation and opposition of different internal and external forces, personalities, programmes and influences, finally leading to its dissolution.

The Bauhaus workshops contributed to the interior design, as Robin Krause shows in his discussion of Marcel Breuer's tubular steel furniture and Lutz Schöbe in an essay on the wall-painting shop. As Marie Neumüllers indicates, the Bauhaus building does not draw its atmosphere simply from architecture, but from the interplay between the people who lived and worked there. Karin Wilhelm's contribution shows how this glass building communicates directly with the people who come into it; she interprets the design and the realized building in terms of the "socialization performance of the senses", especially sight. The Bauhaus has attracted world-wide attention since the day it opened, and Wolfgang Thöner and Walter Scheiffele cite numerous commentaries and reviews by visitors to reflect the various impressions in a field of tension between fascination and repulsion. Julius Posener's account of his personal impressions is still one of the most immediate and precise reactions by visitors to the building and has therefore been included here as well.

The majority of the contributions to this book reflect the results of research and work by employees and associates of the Bauhaus Dessau Foundation. My thanks go to them, and to all the other employees involved from the department Sammlung, Helene Maron of the department Akademie, the external authors, the photographers and editors, the Cyan graphics office and the graphic designer Renate Keil, and not least to Andreas Müller, editor for Birkhäuser Publishers, with whom it has been a joy to work professionally. I am also most grateful to the many archives involved and to people who have lent photographs, especially to the Bauhaus-Archiv in Berlin, which supported this



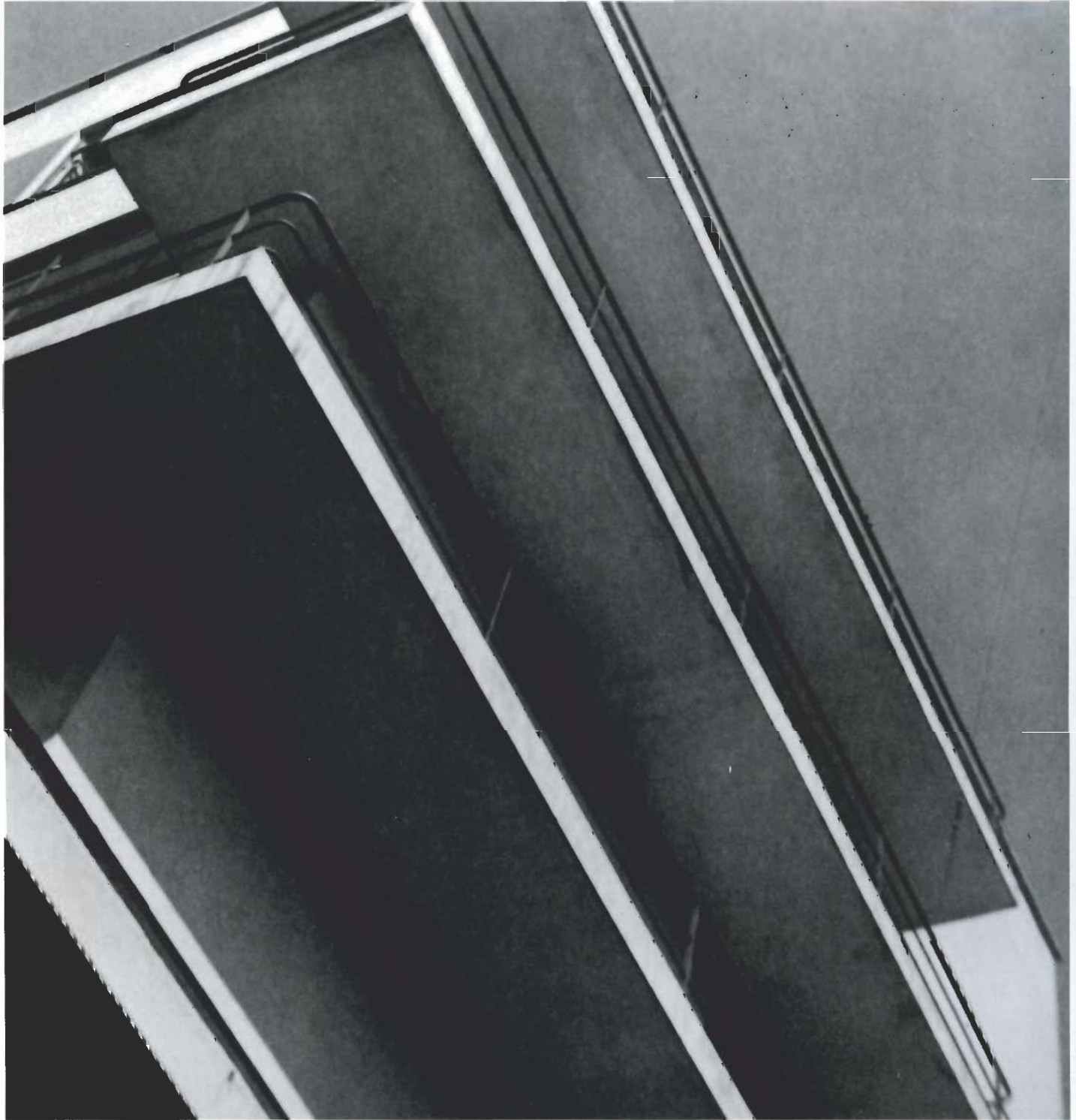
project for a critical assessment of the Dessau Bauhaus building, and also an act of homage to architect Walter Gropius and the Hochschule für Gestaltung in his day.

- 1 Walter Gropius, Manifest und Programm des Staatlichen Bauhauses in Weimar, April 1919, Stiftung Bauhaus Dessau, Archiv der Sammlung.
- 2 Walter Gropius listed the following architects as involved in planning and executing his Bauhaus buildings: Carl Fieger, Friedrich Hirz, Max Krajewsky, Fritz Levedag, Otto Meyer-Ottens, Ernst Neufert, Heinz Nösselt, Richard Paulick, Herbert Schipke, Bernhard Sturtzkopf, Franz Throll, Walter Tralau and Hans Volger. See: Walter Gropius, *Bauhausbauten Dessau* (1930), reprint Mainz, Berlin 1974, p. 12.
- 3 op. cit. note 2, p. 14.
- 4 op. cit. note 2, p. 15.

Karin Wilhelm

Seeing – walking – thinking

The Bauhaus building design



The Programme

The first issue of the magazine *bauhaus*, the organ of the new Hochschule für Gestaltung Bauhaus Dessau, which had moved to Dessau in March 1925, appeared on 4 December 1926, on the same day that the Bauhaus staff who had come from Weimar "ceremoniously"¹ opened their new premises, the new Bauhaus building. Director Walter Gropius was responsible for publishing and editing the magazine, but László Moholy-Nagy chose the articles and controlled its typographical appearance. The desire to present the Bauhaus in words and images and not just through projects and products resulted from a far-sighted assessment of the propaganda value of journalistic publicity. Thus this issue was more than merely for information. Wassily Kandinsky and Moholy-Nagy provided keynote articles on the programme for the future Bauhaus teaching in Dessau, and both Oskar Schlemmer and Georg Muche contributed reports on the new Bauhaus stage and the influence of industrial design on fine art.

But even before readers started to find out about the teaching and working programme from the articles, they were amazed by the layout of the *Bauhaus* magazine, which was full of visual surprises to amaze them and make them curious about the contents. The printed page was divided into two columns, and the typeface a mixture of serif and grotesque; bars, bands of vertical text and different font widths were the preferred typographical elements. Above all, readers were intended to be disturbed by the consistent use of lower-case, to show that the Bauhaus teachers were not simply concerned with renewing fonts and the appearance of the printed page. For this reason the editors printed an answer to the question "why do we write everything in lower case?" on the last page above the imprint: "because it is an inconsistent use of language to write differently from the way we speak. we do not speak any capitalized sounds, and so we do not write them. and: is it not possible to say the same with one alphabet as it is with two? why do we mix two alphabets with completely different characters in one word or sentence and make the printed page

inharmonious? either upper or lower case. the upper-case alphabet is illegible when set. thus lower case. and: when we think of the typewriter, restricting ourselves to lower-case letters is a great relief and saves time; even when we are thinking further a great deal would be simplified and saved by not using upper-case letters."²

Some people may read these lines as an ironic rebellion, not meant entirely seriously, against traditional educational values, a hot-headed affront against guardians of written and spoken German in high schools and academic circles, but the attentive reader soon realized that this was about more than just a short, amusing piece of writing. Hidden away within it was a statement about conceptual decisions made in principle, which were to be the future basis for the Dessau Bauhaus's educational intentions. First of all there was a statement that differentiation models had to result from different forms of use. The suggestion is that arbitrary distinctions, like the differently written large and small letters, have to be replaced by the uniform practice that everyone in any case observed equally every day when they were speaking, for example. In confirmation of this the passage referred to unifying mechanical and machine motorics, as could be observed in the use of a typewriter, for example. As the rhythm of machines structured the life-rhythm of human beings, it seemed only logical to organize their everyday life equally economically and rationally, and with just as much time-saving. Given all this, the alphabet, like all other forms of human and social everyday practice was to be examined in terms of its usefulness, manageability and purpose from the point of view of saving time, and changed where necessary.³

The Bauhaus teachers had taken a landmark of Western culture, written language, and used it to formulate a fundamental stylistic change for everyday life. They justified the process of revision they were undertaking by drawing attention to the lack of practicability of many cultural traditions in the modern world. Traditions like lower- and upper-case type in the German language, they felt, were simply dysfunctional, and increasingly an obstacle to the economy of use. This fixed

the maxim of work at the Dessau Bauhaus: from then on every design idea had to prove itself in the functional sense of use, and this included everything from the "sofa cushion to city planning" (a slogan they had borrowed from the Deutscher Werkbund), from wallpaper to a large-scale building project, from individual letters to a complete text.

The title page of the magazine that was distributed to the many guests from Germany and abroad who came to the opening of the Bauhaus building read like an explanation of this guiding principle. Four pictures of the new school building – an aerial photograph from the archive of the large Junkers aircraft factory in Dessau, a view taken by Lucia Moholy for the Bauhaus, and finally two ground plans showing how the building was placed on the site and the way in which the interior space was divided up – were explained in two texts by the director: short, to the point, and in lower case. "instead of an introduction"⁴ said the heading to a table surveying the history of the Bauhaus in a few sentences, from the "dissolution announcement at christmas 1924 in weimar" to the takeover by Dessau in "april 1925", "a centre of the central german lignite field with increasing

economic development",⁵ as Gropius stressed. The introduction to the new school building confined itself to neutral, informative data, the distribution and use of space, costs and technical facts. The building was a compartmentalized concrete skeleton, and steel and glass were the materials used for the large and small window units. Almost pedantically, with a bookkeeper's precision, Gropius provided information about building costs, the cubic capacity of the building, the distribution of the workshops, and finally about the division of the whole complex into three, the specialist building for the "Anhaltische Berufsschule" (vocational school), the Bauhaus workshop wing and the studio building. Thus the Bauhaus used only one, admittedly the largest, part of the building for itself. The adjacent, multi-storey studio building contained 28 residential units for Bauhaus students, and Gropius stressed how modern the installations in this building were. A communal dumb waiter served the kitchen, there were bathroom facilities in the basement and even an "electric wash-house". The "colour schemes", the lamps and the tubular steel furniture were Bauhaus designs developed and manufactured in the school's own workshops.

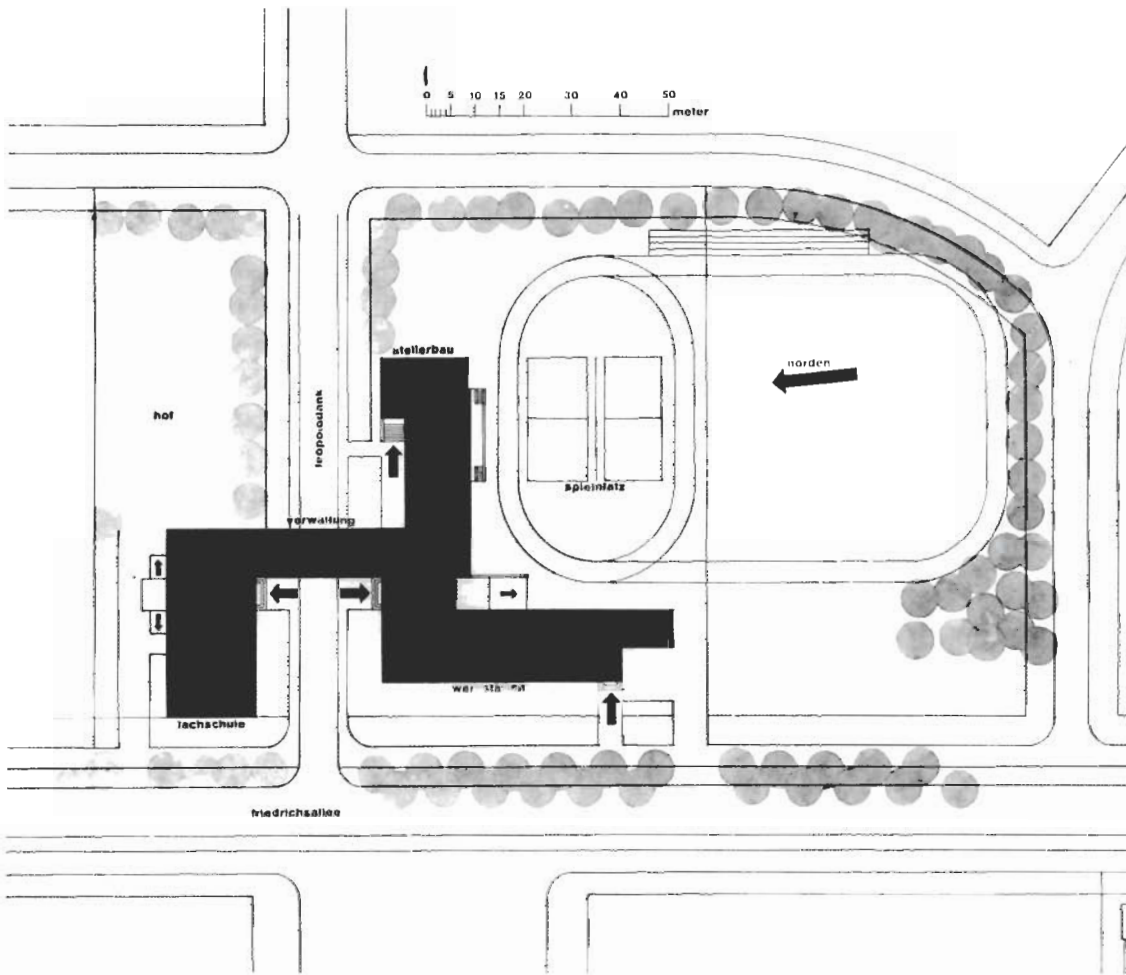
Walter Gropius has restricted his description of the building to listing the relevant technical, financial and functional information. He made no mention at all of all the events that would have given a sense of the emotions that kept welling up, the political battles fought for months on end by Fritz Hesse, the Liberal Democrat mayor of Dessau, in the town council for adopting the Bauhaus and building the school, which had been completed in the meantime. Gropius obviously also did not think it worth mentioning the individual commitment of the various citizens' factions, who spoke out vehemently for the school, as did Franz von Hoeblein, Dessau's director of music, or the state curator of monuments, Ludwig Grote, or equally vehement conservative opponents like some section of the Dessau craft community. Even his own design work, the architectural concept for the unusual architecture of the new school building, remained the architect's secret. Gropius was clearly concerned to play down the school's poli-



Plaster & Döbje

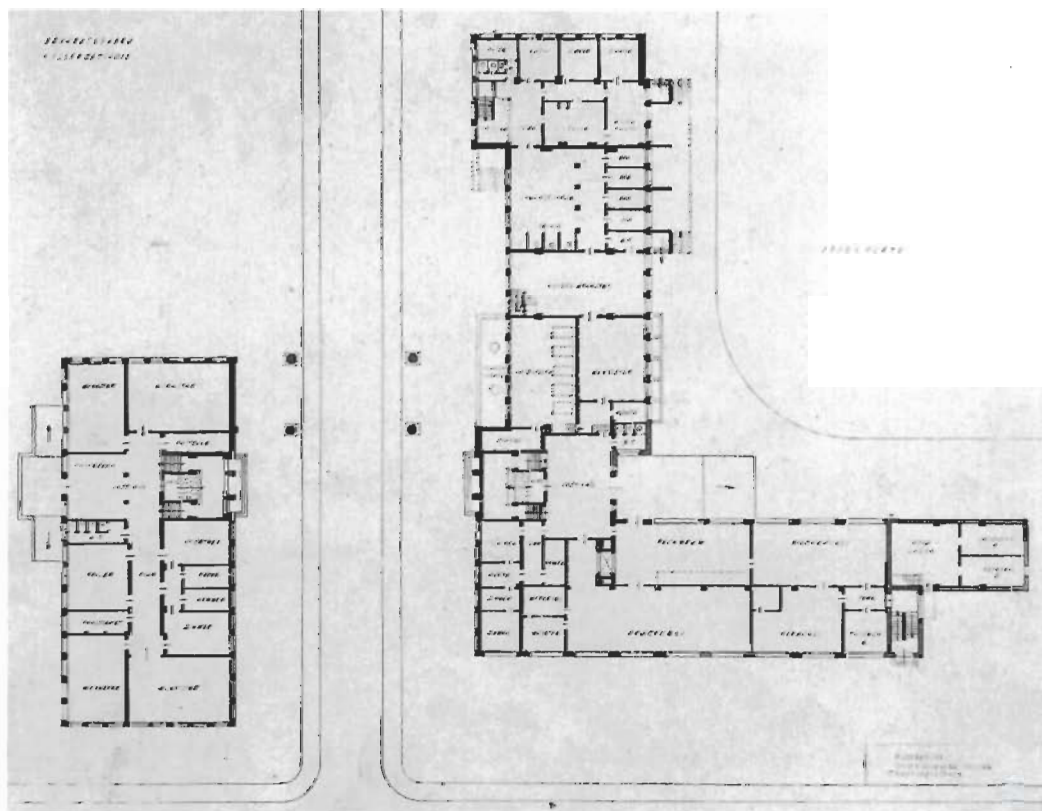
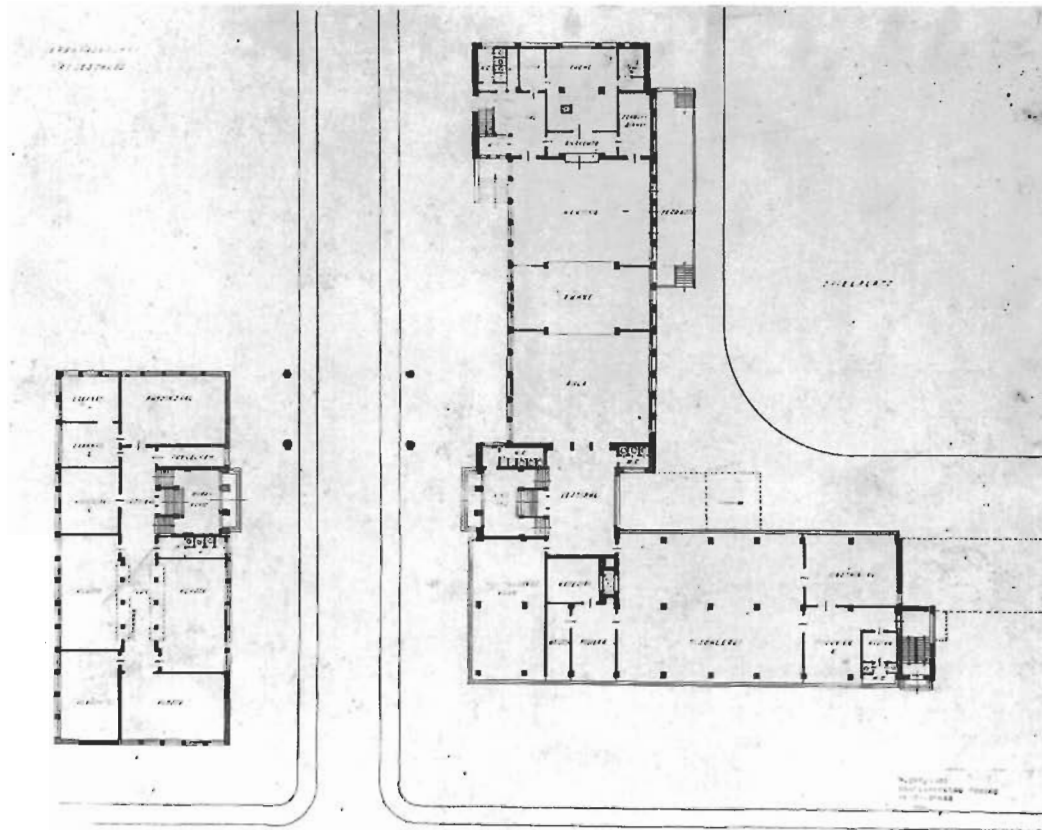
Site plan of the Bauhaus building, 1926.

Aerial photograph of the Bauhaus building, 1925/26.



Plans of basement floor, ground floor, 1st and 2nd floors dating from the time when the Bauhaus was built.
 Basement floor (below)
 Ground floor (above)

14



2nd floor (above)

15

tical difficulties, so that he could make the design process and thus the Bauhaus building seem to have resulted from rational, carefully calculated decisions. This was the message derived from this short, objectively formulated text, intended to convince that the new building was a plain, functional, smoothly operating piece of house equipment, the three-dimensional equivalent of Bauhaus education, which strove to be scientific and rational. The unemotional diction suggested the technical and instrumental character of the architecture, which seemed to be constructed with all the logic of a machine so that it could work like a machine. Architect Gropius invoked in terms of his language the ideal image of a modest functionalism arising logically and necessarily from the meaningful quality of the uses.

Gropius soon regretted having given this impression. In 1930, when he published Bauhausbuch no. 12, *bauhausbauten Dessau*, he was already protesting about the "erroneous impression" that the Bauhaus could be seen as "an apotheosis of rationalism".⁶ Certainly Gropius had contributed to this misunderstanding himself to a large extent and thus woven the first strand in a myth from which the Bauhaus has still not been able to disentangle itself. The image of the rational, functional Bauhaus style has survived. Ilya Ehrenburg, who had been fascinated shortly after the building was completed, corrected his judgement when writing his memoirs. He wrote in the early sixties: "I was in Dessau, where the Bauhaus now is – the school of Modern art. A building made of glass. The style of the era has been found: the cult of dry reason."⁷

The design

The first plans for the symbol of "dry reason" were drawn up shortly after the successful negotiations for the town of Dessau to take over the Bauhaus in March 1925. At the same time Gropius's architectural practice designed several houses for the so-called Altmeister, including the famous artist-teachers of the Weimar foundation years, Paul Klee, Wassily Kandinsky, Lyonel Feininger and, of course, Walter Gropius. A good year later, in June 1926, Gropius's practice was commissioned to build an

estate of small houses in the Dessau district of Törten. In this way Dessau was offering the director of the Bauhaus the wonderful possibility of implementing in a practical and exemplary fashion everything that he had laid down as theoretical educational aims for the new "Hochschule für Gestaltung":

- „1 the intellectual, craftsmanlike and technical training of creatively gifted people for artistic design work, especially for building, and
- 2 the execution of practical experimental work, especially in terms of housing and domestic furnishings, and also the development of standard models for industry and craftsmanship.“⁸

The new Bauhaus building had to serve this educational task. A site on the outskirts of the town had been selected, a large area behind the station for which there had been development plans for a long time, but they had not been pursued.⁹ Even so, the street pattern for the site had been largely fixed. Gropius, working with Ernst Neufert and Carl Fieger, developed the basic idea for structuring the buildings from this access system. As the new Bauhaus building was required to include the "Technische Lehranstalt" (technical school), which was administratively independent of the Bauhaus, enough space had to be placed at the disposal of this institution and its independence had to show in its appearance. The architects found a simple but convincing solution to this problem in their planning. They separated the Bauhaus section from the section intended for the technical school by positioning one of them on the left-hand side and the other on the right-hand side of the road called Leopolddank, which joins Friedrichstraße at this point. Thus the entrances to the two schools faced each other across Leopolddank. The two buildings were joined together at first-floor level by the so-called bridge over Leopolddank, which housed the director's suite and the architecture department, which was a new feature created in Dessau. It was clear that the two colleges were independent of each other, but it was also clear that they lived under the same roof, a flat roof, which was laid over the cubic building blocks like a protective cloth. With this decision, the architects

had laid down the principle of functional differentiation into autonomous building units, and this became an architectural guideline for the whole Bauhaus complex. When it was opened the building did not seem like a homogeneous block within a single perspective, but more like an accumulation of several independent buildings. They differed in volume, height and spatial disposition according to their particular functions – work, residential, leisure. "A building based on the spirit of today turns away from the prestigious appearance of the symmetrical façade. One has to walk around this building to grasp its corporeality and the function of its elements",¹⁰ wrote Gropius later.

There were linking as well as dividing elements, like the shared roofing, and there were points of intersection at which the individual volumes penetrated each other, like the hall and canteen area. There were few basic architectural elements developed from the structural requirements that visibly convey their context. Rendered wall surfaces in gleaming white alternated with longitudinal rectangular walls of steel-framed, shimmering bands or walls of windows, which closed the concrete support frame and made it a protecting body for the enclosed space. The architecture of the building consisted of a clear combination of a very few solid wall and transparent plate glass elements, whose modules were defined by the construction of the steel frame. These façades did reveal different uses, but this was no more than a reflection of the need to provide a larger or smaller amount of light in the interior. The interior flexibility was essentially invisible in the ground plan. Here the architects had developed a kind of lower-case spelling in the alphabet of architecture, which refused to make value statements by using decorative, ornamental emphases of individual parts of the building, thus in a way rejecting a hierarchy of large and small letters. In this way the new Bauhaus building seemed just as unusual and for many even as shocking as the lower-case spelling in the Bauhaus newspaper.

The observer's eye was pretty well duped by the architectural solution adopted in the workshop wing, whose three upper storeys were

clad on both sides with a suspended, continuous glass wall. Here artistic will had conformed with the construction principle of bearing piers and non-bearing walls, making a visual calculation and placing the cellar storey with its full run of windows behind the walls. The floors above this protruded, so that the traditional relationship of a massive, dominant base and a wall supported by this seemed to have been stood on its head. The glazed workshop wing seemed unfounded, unsupported and yet stable in a mysterious way, it seemed to float. Ilya Ehrenburg expressed his amazement on seeing the building in 1929: "when i finally caught sight of the 'bauhaus', which seems to be all of a piece, like a persistent thought, and its glass walls, forming a transparent angle, flowing into the air and yet separated from it by a precise will – i stood still involuntarily, and this was not amazement at the sight of a sensual invention, no, it was simply admiration. there is a legitimate continuity in architecture, and i imagine that it will not be difficult for an expert to establish the pedigree of these forms. i should just like to say something about the triumph of clarity. this building is to a certain extent in a state of hostile contrast to its neighbours and to the ground itself, for the first time the earth sees a cult of naked reason here ... every angle, every line, right down to the last detail, repeats the conclusion of theorems forgotten since schooldays: 'qed ...'"¹¹

The Bauhaus teachers obviously sensed some of this unease in the face of logical conclusiveness, at least Paul Klee did. He reported to his wife Lily on 14 November 1926 that he had pulled himself together and "dashed desperately ... into the new building", and found out: "that the new classroom ... is nice and light and very roomy. There is a clever, dark-green roller wall blackboard, and I like that. You turn a handle and what you have written moves up and a new space without any writing on it comes up from below."¹²

So Klee was convinced of the sense of utility value – quod erat demonstrandum!

The models

Ilya Ehrenburg was right when he said that the Bauhaus building was certainly not without a pedigree. Four years after Ehrenburg's suggestion, art historian Emil Kaufmann pointed out the source of this tectonic approach in the revolutionary architecture that he found in exemplary form in Claude-Nicolas Ledoux's work in the late 18th century.¹³

The isolation of the sections of the building and the independence of the parts, the preference for elementary geometry, the fact that the wall has a life of its own, the striving for purity, were all described by Kaufmann as the essential formal steps in the development of Modern architecture, which led from Ledoux to Le Corbusier. Walter Gropius was completely familiar with these emblems of reason¹⁴ from studies that he had carried out with Adolf Meyer, who was his office manager for many years, of buildings by the Prussian successors of those revolutionary architects. Like Meyer he loved Karl Friedrich Schinkel's lucid classicism, and of course their joint working experience since 1910 had been reflected in the architectural concept of the Bauhaus, even though Alfred Meyer left Gropius' practice in 1925, when the Bauhaus moved to Dessau.¹⁵ This particular line of development was later emphasized by Italian art historian Giulio Carlo Argan in his subtle and sensitive essay on Walter Gropius e la Bauhaus. "The first idea for the building ..., Gropius's masterpiece and a masterpiece of all Modern European architecture, can be traced back to the plan for a philosophical academy designed with Meyer in 1923."¹⁶ In fact this design already showed "... the principle of divisibility firmly fixed in the ground plan",¹⁷ as Argan put it, which made it possible to differentiate the uses to which the various buildings were put within the three-dimensional space. Ultimately the architecture of the Bauhaus focused all the experiments and experience that Gropius and Meyer had worked on and accumulated since their first building, the Fagus shoe last factory in Alfeld an der Leine (1910/11). This factory and office building was subject to the dictates of rational, effective spatial organization; Gropius and Meyer had been familiar with this design precept since their first joint work



in Peter Behrens's office in Berlin. Asymmetry, the different heights and window sizes had become a visible sign of this. For the Alfeld office building, the two young architects had also designed large areas of window-strips between recessed piers, above all an unsupported corner formed at the point where two strips of windows met. Here the construction of the curtain wall had already been interpreted in its architectural dimension, and Gropius and Meyer logically took it further in the diaphanous glass wall and the curve of the glazed staircase skin for the office building at the Cologne Werkbund exhibition in 1914. Finally the architecture of the Bauhaus building showed that it was shaped by all the plans for industrial buildings that the Gropius practice had developed between 1914 and 1926.¹⁸ The extension plans for the Fagus factory metalwork shop in 1923 in particular had conceptual features that seemed like a preliminary design for the workshop wing in Dessau. Even the silhouette of the Dessau building anticipated the disposition of the Dessau Bauhaus: in Alfeld too the old office building and the planned new metalwork shop were separated by an existing road. Even the linking bridge was sketched in. But this plan was not thought completely through, the proportions remained underdeveloped and incorrect, a fault that was brilliantly corrected in the new Bauhaus building. This 1923 plan did show the idea for the Dessau workshop wing almost down to the last detail, but it must be stressed that the significance and interpretation of construction a continuous

glass wall had been a stock-in-trade of the Meyer-Gropius co-operation from the outset. Ultimately both men were familiar with the genealogy and architectural problems of iron-and-glass architecture, they were familiar with the great factory halls, the glass façades of the department stores in the big cities, and of course they had in the meantime become aware of the radical suggestions made by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe in his glass office building designs in 1921 and 1922. All this knowledge and their own experience culminated in the curtain wall of the Bauhaus building in unmistakable and mature handwriting whose letters had been part of the Gropius practice's repertoire for a long time. It was clear that Gropius would want to draw on all this knowledge in order to be able to carry out a technical experiment on the scale of the Bauhaus glass façade.

By suggesting somewhat contemptuously that the Bauhaus was a thought and education factory, by talking about the industrial style, some architecture critics later believed that they had discovered some sort of artistic inability in Gropius as an architect. But although they named it correctly, they failed to recognize the intended analogy between the modern industrial world of work and the world of design at the Bauhaus. Ultimately the educational aim was to prepare young designers for human life shaped by machines, to teach them to develop prototypes for up-to-date, machine-produced houses, chairs, tables, cupboards, lamps, cups, in short, design for modern life.¹⁹ This aim was convincingly identified in the language of an architecture parlante that argued by pointing out the signs of modern industrial architecture. Another effective line was an essentially socialist analysis of equality in society, which saw people subsumed under the law of comparable quantities of work: the craftsman, the industrial worker and the artist. As early as 1919 Walter Gropius had justified the specific educational structure of the Bauhaus in Weimar by pointing out this equality: "Architects, sculptors, painters, we all must return to the crafts! ... There is no essential difference between the artist and the craftsman ... Let us then create a new guild of craftsmen

without the class-distinctions that raise an arrogant barrier between craftsman and artist."²⁰

Even before the move to Dessau this programme had become reality. Since the 1923 slogan "Art and technology – a new unity" industrial production has been a major guideline for Bauhaus teaching, and the anonymous working process of the industrial labourer superseded the fixation on the individuality of the craft design. The socialistic position that allotted the role of social and political avant-garde to the industrial workforce was accepted, and the artistic avant-garde followed this lead. The craftsman became the product designer, later they were called industrial designers. The place where such people were trained was still called a workshop in the Bauhaus, but the director preferred to call it a "laboratory". And so when the resources of contemporary, Modern industrial architecture were adopted for the Bauhaus building, the justification was that it was intended not just for teaching, but for industrial production – and if this used craft techniques, the aim was to produce prototypes for mechanical duplication and exploitation. Seen like this, the workshop wing was not just analogous with a factory building, but actually comparable with one.

The architecture

Factory, laboratory, school, it was quite legitimate to associate all those things with the Bauhaus building. Gropius the architect would certainly also have agreed with its being called rational, functional, modern. But catchwords of this kind were not enough for him, because they reflected his intentions only partially. And so he raised an objection: "what draws an artistic designer to the perfect achievements of technology?" he asked in the foreword to his book about the Dessau Bauhaus buildings in 1930, and replied: "their means of design! for their inner truth, the way in which all their parts tersely, with no empty phrases, lead to an organism appropriate to function, the bold exploitation of new materials and methods is also a logical prerequisite for artistic creation ... a work of art is always ... a product of technology, but it also has spiritual purposes to fulfil that can be made visible

only with the resources of imagination and passion. and here the other great problem comes into the bauhaus's field of vision: what is space? what resources are used to create it?"²¹

It seems reasonable to assume that Gropius was compelled to point out the core idea of his Bauhaus architecture persistently, because the reproach that the education offered by the Bauhaus and the architecture of the building were simply in the grip of rationalism affected him a great deal as a misunderstanding. According to this statement, the functional aspect, which could impinge in the spatial use programme as more than an objectified value, needed more than a "technician's understanding", it needed "an artist's mental and spiritual drive".²² Only an artist was capable of turning pure function into joyful use. Gropius was looking for artistic imagination, even passion, highly subjective spontaneous impulses, to make mere building into architecture. But what was architecture, what created a link between rational analysis and emotional spontaneity, the two poles between which Gropius saw his approach to design harnessed?

Gropius owed his conceptual framework about the nature of architecture to artistic theory in the late 19th and very early 20th century. The theoretical framework had been provided by academics like August Schmarsow, Heinrich Wölfflin and Wilhelm Worringer, who was a frequent visitor to the Bauhaus, and very friendly with some of the Bauhaus masters like Kandinsky and Gropius himself. These men's theories were directed against so-called aesthetic materialism, against the assertion that architecture was a reflection of tectonics and materials, for which decoration on buildings was the outward adornment. Artistic theory at the turn of the century counters this argument by referring to ideal causes and defining architecture as the creation of space, an act that was merely using the material conditions for its own purposes. According to this definition, architecture was the creation of space, in which the idea of man's special relationship with the world is expressed. Thus the aesthetic effect was understood to be aimed at physical feelings, which became an aesthetic ex-

perience through "empathy", in fact became "objectified self-enjoyment".²³ By expressing this view Worringer had made architecture into an objectified space for the experience of self, an approach that Wassily Kandinsky followed for painting in 1911 in his book *Über das Geistige in der Kunst*. But for Kandinsky self-experience, a sense of "vibration" when faced with an abstract image, served a higher purpose, as he felt that the idea of aesthetic self-enjoyment was tinged with "the sound of redemption".²⁴

This vision of salvation was of no significance to Gropius in 1926, and yet it was present in secularized form. The architect of the Bauhaus building reinterpreted the idea of "objectified self-enjoyment", which Worringer found essential for the anthropologically determined "need for self-activation", which in turn produced a "feeling of freedom, a feeling of pleasure",²⁵ a feeling of happiness, into a model for resolving social conflict. Gropius identified the fundamental evil of the Modern age in the image of modern man at odds with himself because industrialization had forced him into a division of labour that increasingly caused his biological and sensual abilities to atrophy. This modern "machine"-man was nothing more than a distorted image of his original, innate abilities. Bauhaus education was intended to correct this situation as a paradigm and provide models to introduce the reconstruction of this lost biological ability. Gropius described this approach in 1922 in the "declaration about differences of opinion at the Bauhaus": "It (the Bauhaus) consciously attempted to replace the division of labour with unified work, which sees the creative act of design as an indivisible whole ... We will look for people who have been comprehensively trained in the way that we try to follow at the Bauhaus, and these people will redeem the real machine from its thrall! The free artist, who is feeling his way towards a machine without a purpose, already uses this compass of the future. He is not opposed to the machine, but he wants to tame its demon; once it is in his power, then unity is there."²⁶ The idea that it is possible to work against deformation and the expropriation of creative self-affirmation was part of the

Bauhaus's foundation potential. The Bauhaus educational approach approved of this idea, as established in the Vorkurs by Johannes Itten in 1919 and then extended by Moholy-Nagy and Josef Albers. Itten had put the training of the "physical body, hand, arm, shoulders and the senses"²⁷ at the beginning of students' training. Touching, tasting, smelling and attentive observation were at the centre of his resensitizing exercises. Moholy picked up this training of the senses, and had his pupils draw up touch-tables, as he thought that "with their aid (they can) register many different sensations ..."²⁸ Experiencing one's own sensual body was part of the reconstruction process. Pupils and teachers were required to liberate themselves from the constraints of their intellectualized existence, and Gropius made his vision of a new architecture that was to come part of this appeal for liberation. Gropius answered the Bauhaus's key question of what space actually is by identifying spatial creations as a means for implementing individual happiness – just as Woringer and Kandinsky had described it; now it was possible for architects to have this on earth.

The process of reconstructing the senses was also behind the architectural concept of the Bauhaus building. It was to function meaningfully not just as a building for education and production, but as architecture, as a spatial creation, demanding and at the same time satisfying the minds and senses of its users. The meaningful linking of rationality and spontaneity, which Gropius had emphasized as the motive for his design work, was an integral part of his spatial creation.

Seeing – walking – thinking

The dominant building material in the new spatial creation in Dessau was glass. Gropius, like most of his comrades-in-arms, had been enthusiastic about this material for some time. He wrote in an essay in 1926: "glass is the purest building material consisting of earthly matter, closing off space and keeping out weather, but also having the effect of opening up space, without being and light ... glass architecture, a poetic utopia until recently, is becoming an uninhibited reality."²⁹ In his reference

to the literary work of the highly esteemed Paul Scheerbart, who had inspired Gropius, but above all his Berlin colleague Bruno Taut, to produce architectural miracles that truly seemed fantastic even before the 1914 war, the Bauhaus director was offering his interpretation of the way modern man is in the world, his view of the new relationship between man and space.³⁰

The material equivalent to what Gropius called modern man's "changed perception of space"³¹ was glass. It seemed suited like no other material to express man's newly acquired ability to flee from earth and its gravity and to capture the new spatial feeling of weightless and dynamics in architecture. This narrative materialized in the enormous glass walls of the workshop wing, and all the visitors to Dessau in the twenties agreed that they were overwhelmed by the apparent weightlessness of the building. The response to the Bauhaus was dominated by this view for a long time.

Permeability and transparency, simultaneity, interior and exterior flowing together and blurring, were among the most frequent descriptions of this glass architecture. Sigfried Giedion, in his book *Space, Time and Architecture*, which first appeared in 1941, published a copy of the photograph taken in 1927 by Lucia Moholy of the unsupported corner of the workshop wing. The accompanying text said: "In this case it is the interior and the exterior of a building which are presented simultaneously. The extensive transparent areas, by dematerializing the corners, permit the hovering relations of planes and the kind of 'overlapping' which appears in contemporary painting."³²

It is quite true that Lucia Moholy's photographic eye revealed this dissolve of interior and exterior space structurally, caught the viewers' attention and taught them to see architecture in a new way: first in the change from looking in to looking out by looking through. The formerly rigid spatial boundary became a vibrant membrane in the lightness and lack of essence of these broad glass walls. The glass wall shimmered with the exchange of space-time, in it "lived space" was communicated, which, as Graf Dürckheim wrote in 1932, is the "medium of living realization for the self ..., threat-

Elstisch in Bauhaus.

Acce

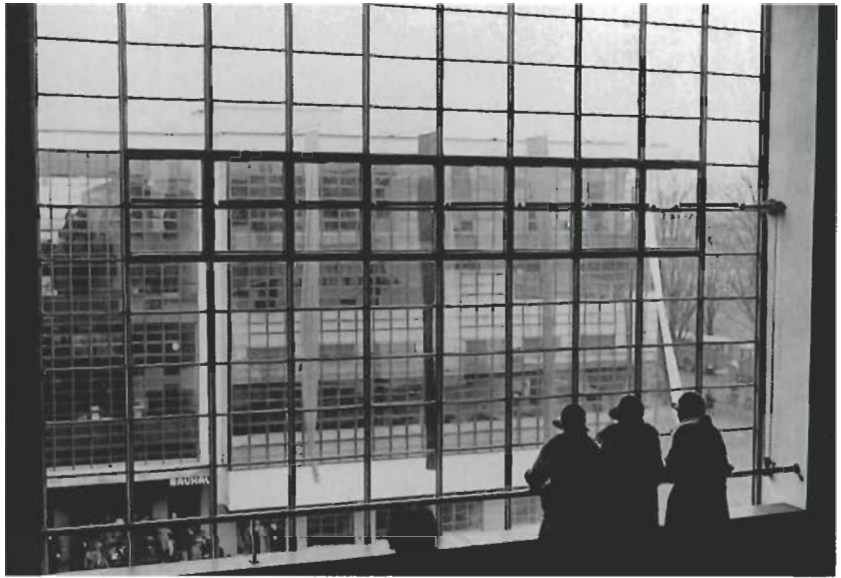


ening or preserving, passing through or staying, somewhere strange or home, material, place of fulfilment and possibility for development, resistance and boundary, organ and opposite number of this self in its momentary reality of being and life."³³

The glass façade was a kind of screen for active life. On it could now be seen living people who had liberated the old façade keepers, the atlases and caryatids, of the burden they had carried for centuries and now replaced them "uninhibitedly" with their own "reality": in contemporary dress, often with bobbed hair and cigarettes between their lips. Rudolf Arnheim recorded this fact from the point of view of Protestant ethics in 1927, when he wrote: "You can keep a close eye on people doing their work even from the outside, look into the private lives of people resting ... One is very tempted here to judge this honesty morally as well."³⁴ But the people who were being watched so closely could look out themselves, they were not just observed, but also observers, active or contemplative, according to feeling and inclination.

In Dürckheim's analysis "lived space had acquired (a) double meaning, as a "'development possibility' and as 'resistance'".³⁵ These two possibilities were contained structurally in the glass façade; the principle of openness, the possibility of development lay in the penetration of space.³⁶ In the line of the glass wall, the material boundary, however, a resistant element materialized, by means of which perception, seeing could become self-aware, and the interpretation of what was seen could become an individual in-sight. The mere act of perception was caught in the optical trap between interior and exterior space, and this training for the eye was transformed into a social act. Georg Simmel had referred to the unique service provided by seeing in the socialization process in his *Soziologie der Sinne* in 1907: "Of all the individual sense organs the eye provides a completely unique sociological service: by linking individuals and in the interaction that lies in looking at each other. Perhaps this is the most direct and purest interrelation that exists."³⁷

Gropius had paid tribute to this socialization service provided by the senses through-



out the Bauhaus building, and translated it into an impressive spatial gesture in two places. The Bauhaus contained two cardiac chambers which kept the life-blood of the building flowing: the two great staircases. They were separated from the outside world by a continuous glass wall, and when the stairs were used, in the flow of movement, this constantly provided new views out and in to the opposite wings of the building. Seeing took place while walking, and new viewpoints emerged constantly as people moved up and down. The eyes communicated with changing opposites, and so just as people saw with their legs³⁸ they walked with their eyes – a promenade architecturale that complemented the foundation course daily, and quite incidentally. As they walked people gradually discovered different spaces for their attention, which positively celebrated the communicative force of the senses, because the way in which these staircases were built was linked in terms of building typology with the tradition of the great Baroque staircase, the place that had represented the sociology of courtly society like no other. Broad and almost classical in form, the Bauhaus twin staircase seems distinguished and cool in its dominant black and white. The neutral spatial effect was deliberate, so that the walking or the striding, the sauntering or the hurrying person, could give in to the feeling of this action and become involved in the exchange of glances. Walking through the



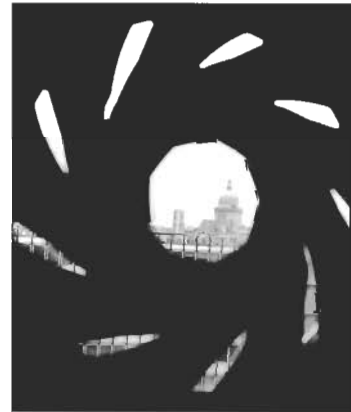
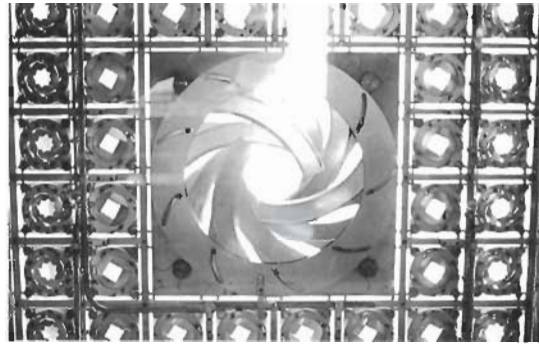
staircase area dissolved and interwove the spaces into facets as people walked and saw.

Oskar Schlemmer condensed this play of space into a metaphor of melancholy space with his 1932 "Bauhaustreppe", with men and women passing lightly through as in a dance. Moholy-Nagy described Schlemmer's dream or space dance as the most considered form of movement as early as 1929: "and so from the point of view of the subject space can be most directly experienced through movement, and on a higher level through dance. dance is at the same time an elementary device for fulfilling space design wishes. it can condense space, structure it: space expands, sinks and floats – fluctuating in all directions."³⁹

Gropius had rightly pointed out that the architecture of the Bauhaus was not a functional diagram for the "form follows function" equation. In fact the architecture of the Bauhaus was a manifesto in which the sense of use was bound to sensual and intellectual satisfaction, to an act of physical experience of self and the impulse to reflect about it. It was a spatial creation in which joy at overcoming gravity, the technical, demiurgic, modern relationship to the world was interpreted purely, optimistically and naïvely. This architecture tried to translate the ephemeral into space, the kinetics that Moholy-Nagy produced in his photographs and objects. The penetration of objects and space achieved by multiple exposure had inspired this architecture of fluent spaces. The design of the Bauhaus was due to a photographer's eye that László Moholy-Magy, to whom Gropius was close at the time, modelled into an artistic form of operative seeing in his photographic experiments. But it was left to Moholy's wife Lucia to distil out the architectural idea in her brilliant photographs of the Bauhaus building, and that with all the skill associated with the construction of an analytical eye.⁴⁰

Dessau – Paris

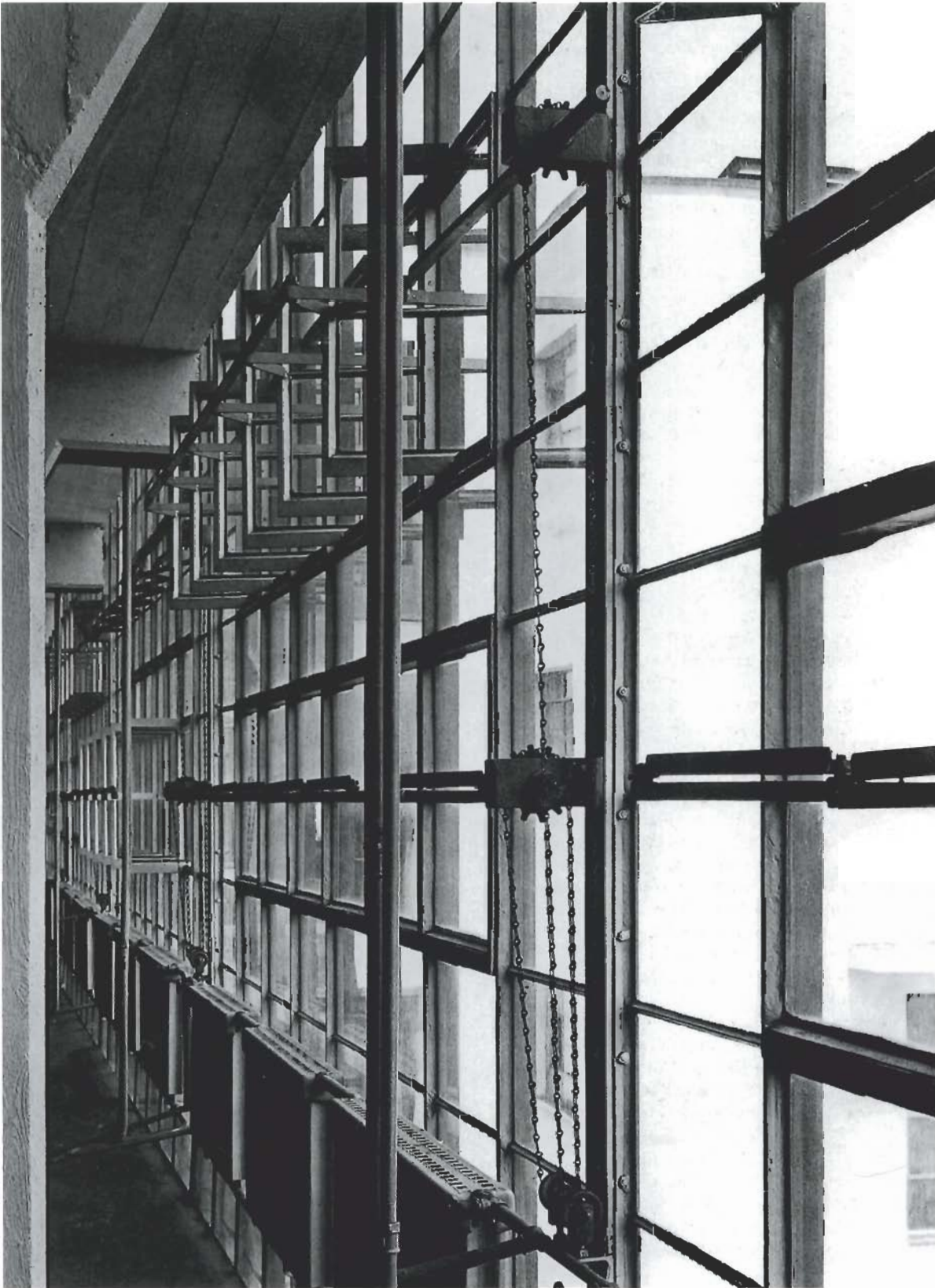
In his 1929 book *Von Material zu Architektur* László Moholy-Nagy predicted the development of a kinetic architecture of experience as the work of coming generations. In fact the architectural idea of



the glass Bauhaus walls has been paraphrased in contemporary Paris. The façade of the Institut du Monde Arabe, designed by Jean Nouvel in the early eighties, is like interwoven oriental ornament when seen from a distance, but on closer examination of the inside of the individual square façade compartments turns out to be a complex assembly of stamped perforated sheet steel, rods and intermeshing gearwheels. With all the precision of the metallic gleaming wheels of a Harley Davidson this mechanism moves invisibly according to the amount of incident light and the temperature, either opening up or restricting the view. The centre is an opening in which sight is focused, like a kind of photographic diaphragm. You complete the click of a camera virtually in your mind and remember the soft clatter of the winding mechanism at certain points in the Dessau Bauhaus building, with the aid of which individual window elements can be opened or closed via a connection system of bicycle chains and cranks. They can still be operated by hand today – according to the temperature or the pleasure taken in playing with light, playing with the moment.

- 1 Bauhaus 1, 1926, p. 3. This opening ceremony has been much described, among others by Ise Gropius, unpublished diary, Bauhaus-Archiv Berlin, and Fritz Hesse, *Von der Residenzstadt zur Bauhausstadt*, Bad Pyrmont 1963.
- 2 op.cit. note 1, p. 6.
- 3 That the individual letters, anticipating their new freedom from the traditional book medium, became autonomous in the future Bauhaus typography, was only logical.
- 4 op.cit. note 1.
- 5 op.cit. note 1.
- 6 Walter Gropius, *Bauhausbauten Dessau*, (1930), reprint Mainz, Berlin 1974, p. 8.
- 7 Ilya Ehrenburg, *Memoiren. Menschen-Jahre-Leben II 1923-1941*, Munich 1965, p. 117.
- 8 op. cit. note 1, p. 2. At this point monographs on Walter Gropius should be listed: Reginald Isaacs, *Walter Gropius. Der Mensch und sein Werk*, 2 vols., Berlin 1984; Winfried Nerdinger, *Walter Gropius*, Berlin 1986; Hartmut Probst, Christian Schädlich (ed.), *Walter Gropius. Der Mensch und sein Werk*, 3 vols., Berlin 1988; Karin Wilhelm, *Walter Gropius. Industriearchitekt*, Braunschweig, Wiesbaden 1983; Hans Maria Wingler, *The Bauhaus*. Weimar, Dessau, Berlin, Chicago. Cambridge/Mass., 7th printing, 1986.
- 9 Cf. Christine Engelmann/Christian Schädlich, *Die Bauhausbauten in Dessau*, Berlin 1991, p. 15 ff.
- 10 op. cit. note 6, p. 19.
- 11 Ilya Ehrenburg, *Visum der Zeit* (1929), Leipzig 1982, p. 94.
- 12 op. cit. note 11.
- 13 Emil Kaufmann, *Von Ledoux bis Le Corbusier. Ursprung und Entwicklung der autonomen Architektur* (1933), Stuttgart 1985.
- 14 Cf. Jean Starobinski, 1789. *Die Embleme der Vernunft*, Munich, no date.
- 15 Cf. Annemarie Jaeggi, Adolf Meyer. *Der zweite Mann. Ein Architekt im Schatten von Walter Gropius*, Berlin 1994.
- 16 Giulio Carlo Argan, *Walter Gropius e la Bauhaus*, Turin 1951. Quotation from the German edition: *Gropius und das Bauhaus*, Braunschweig 1983, p. 66.
- 17 op. cit. note 16.
- 18 Cf. Karin Wilhelm, *Walter Gropius. Industriearchitekt*, Braunschweig, Wiesbaden 1983.
- 19 Cf. Magdalena Droste, *Bauhaus 1919-1933*, Berlin 1990; Hans Maria Wingler, op. cit. note 8; Karin Wilhelm, *Das Bauhaus. Architektur und Design*, in: Monika Wagner (ed.), *Moderne Kunst 2. Das Funkkolleg zum Verständnis der Gegenwartskunst*, Reinbek 1992; Rainer Wick, *Bauhaus Pädagogik*, Cologne 1982.
- 20 Walter Gropius, *Programm des Staatlichen Bauhauses in Weimar*, quoted from: Hans M. Wingler, op. cit. note 8, p. 31.
- 21 op. cit. note 6, p. 8 ff.
- 22 Walter Gropius, *Grundlagen für Neues Bauen* (1926), quoted from: Probst, Schädlich, op. cit. note 8, p. 107.
- 23 Wilhelm Worringer, *Abstraktion und Einfühlung. Ein Beitrag zur Stilpsychologie* (1907), Munich 1981, p. 37; for this see: op. cit. note 18.
- 24 Wassily Kandinsky, *Über das Geistige in der Kunst* (1911), ed.: Max Bill, 10. Aufl., Bern-Bümpliz, p. 43; for this see also: Karin Wilhelm, *Destruktionen. Die Tücken des Apoll*, in: *Kunst als Revolte? Von der Fähigkeit der Künste*, Nein zu sagen, Giessen 1996, p. 103 ff.
- 25 op. cit. note 22, p. 38.
- 26 op. cit. note 6, p. 81 ff.
- 27 Willy Rotzler (ed.), *Johannes Itten. Werke und Schriften*, p. 60.
- 28 László Moholy-Nagy, *Von Material zu Architektur* (1929), Mainz, Berlin 1968, p. 21.
- 29 Walter Gropius, *Glasbau* (1926), in: op. cit. note 21, Probst/Schädlich, p. 103.
- 30 Cf. Martin Heidegger, *Bauen. Wohnen. Denken*, in: *Mensch und Raum. Das Darmstädter Gespräch 1951*, Braunschweig 1991, p. 88.
- 31 op. cit. note 28, p. 103.
- 32 Sigfried Giedion, *Space, Time and Architecture. The Growth of a New Tradition*, Cambridge, Mass. 194, p. 403. Giedion rightly pointed out the influence of painting; in this case he made a comparison with the simultaneity of Cubism in Picasso's work.
- 33 Graf K. von Dürckheim, *Untersuchungen zum gelebten Raum. Neue psychologische Studien*, vol. 6, Munich 1932, p. 389.
- 34 Rudolf Arnheim, quoted from: Magdalena Droste, op. cit. note 19, p. 122.
- 35 Otto Friedrich Bollnow, *Mensch und Raum* (1963), Stuttgart 1990, p. 20.
- 36 Cf. Ernst Bloch, *Das Prinzip Hoffnung*, vol. 2, Frankfurt am Main 1976, p. 858 ff.
- 37 Georg Simmel, *Soziologie. Untersuchungen über die Formen der Vergesellschaftung*, complete edition vol. 2, Frankfurt am Main 1992, p. 723.
- 38 Cf. Humberto Maturana, quoted from: Heinz von Förster, *Wahrnehmen*, in: *Aisthesis. Wahrnehmung heute oder Perspektiven einer anderen Ästhetik*, Leipzig 1990, p. 440.
- 39 op. cit. note 27, p. 195.
- 40 Cf. Rolf Sachsse, Lucia Moholy. *Bauhausfotografin*, in: *Gegenwart Museum*, Berlin 1995. Sachsse fails to recognize the artistry in the photograph when he writes: "All Lucia Moholy's photographs of objects and architecture are neutral to the point of being inartistic ...", p. 17.

Window façade in double profile iron with plate glass in the workshop wing, interior view, photograph by Erich Consemüller, after 1925.



Robin Krause

Marcel Breuer's early tubular steel furniture

On furnishing the Bauhaus building¹

stool , 1926



Marcel Breuer wrote in retrospect about his first tubular steel furniture design: "When I saw my first steel club armchair completed two years ago I thought that this would be the most criticized piece of all my work. It is the most extreme in both its outward appearance and its material expression; it is the least artistic, the least logical, the least 'homely', the most machine-like. The opposite of what I expected was the case."² This club armchair described by Breuer was the first of a group of seven pieces of steel furniture in all, some of them used to furnish the Bauhaus, that have so far been neglected by researchers. It is certain that the hall (ill. 2), the dining-room (ill. 3), the director's office and the students' studios were furnished with steel items by Marcel Breuer. But we can assume that they were also used in other rooms. The art-historical significance of the tubular steel furniture in the Bauhaus building is extremely high. They represent the beginning of Modern tubular steel furniture. Individual types from this group were used as a basis for numerous new designs. This furniture also completed a crucial step in gaining new visual substance.³

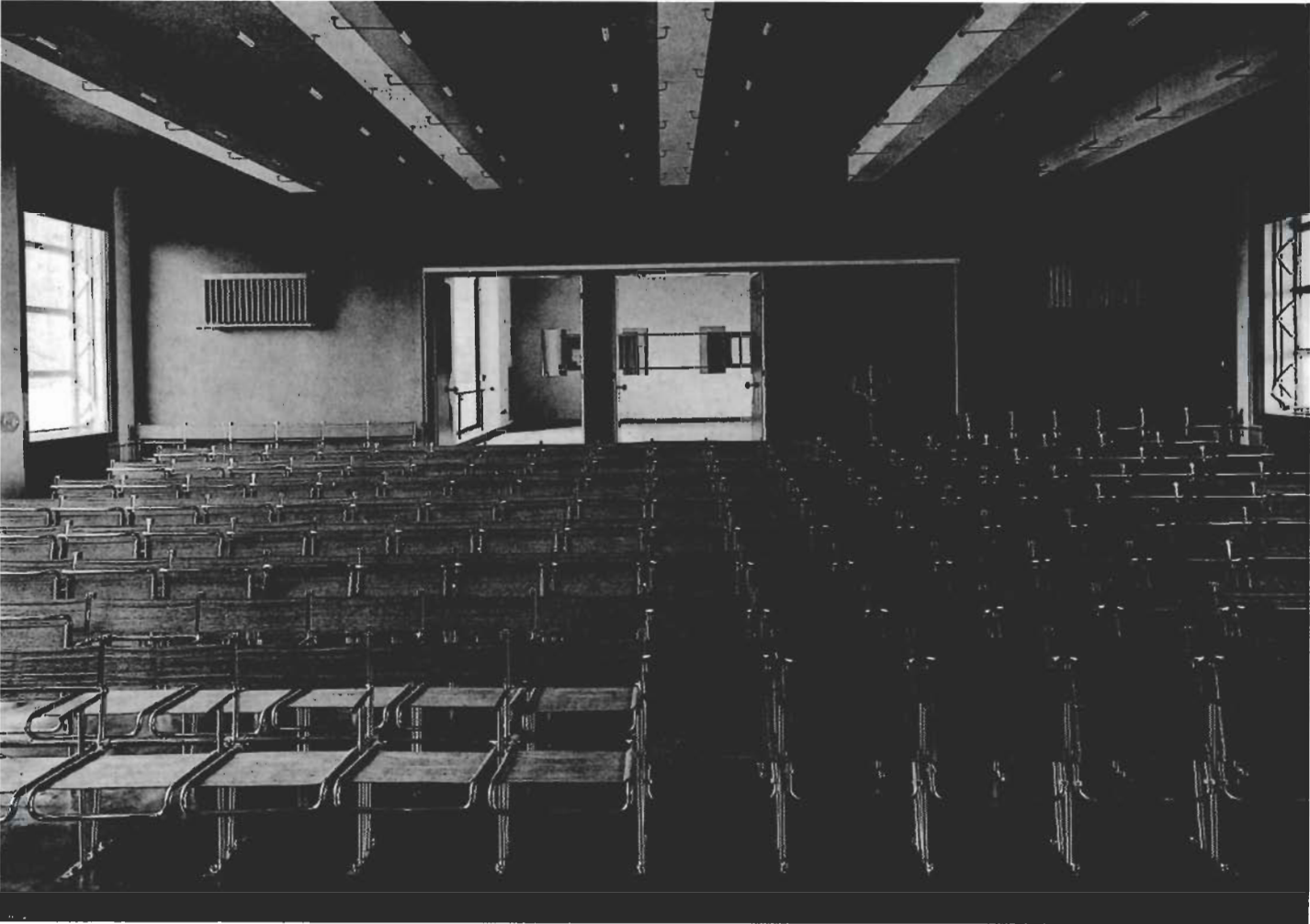
So far there has been no detailed examination of tubular steel furniture at the Bauhaus. The background to its design history is not at all clear. Which types were used to furnish the Bauhaus building? How were they designed? What are their basic design and structural characteristics? An answer to these questions can be found in an analysis of a French patent⁴ dating from 12 September 1927 found by the author in the German Patent Office in Berlin. It contains hitherto unknown drawings of tubular steel furniture by Marcel Breuer.

Photographs of the interior of the Bauhaus show that the regular furniture included theatre seats, stools, chairs with backrests, coffee tables and stands for drawing-boards. But only a very few stools and chairs with backrests have survived of this tubular steel furniture, most of them in the collections of the Bauhaus-Archiv in Berlin and the Bauhaus Dessau foundation. The main features of the tubular steel furniture in the Bauhaus building can be described as follows: the theatre chair for use in the hall (ill. 4) is screwed to the

floor. It is constructed of welded and screwed tubular crosses and some socket connections with screws. The chair-legs are welded to metal plates in pairs. The folding seat, which strikes the horizontal tube for the back legs when in the sitting position, is anchored by means of screws on the front legs. The construction of the stool (ill. 1) used in the dining-room and elsewhere consists of two systems of tubes, two screwed socket connections and a wooden sheet fixed with four screws, whose edges adjacent to the tube are cut concavely. The positioning of the socket connections in the middle of the runners in each case must be particularly stressed here, as this played a crucial role in the design process, as will be discussed later. In the director's office there was a chair with backrest (ill. 5) at the desk that was assembled from two closed sets of tubes in such a way that the looped tube of the seat surrounds a narrower looped tube that in its turn forms the system for the back and the runners. As can be seen from the photographs, both the stool and the backrest chair were part of the furniture of the students' studio (ill. 6). Additionally there was a coffee table (ill. 7) that was comparable with the chair in construction and a drawing-board stand (ill. 8). Only in the students' studios were the tubes of the tubular steel furniture bronzed rather than nickel-plated. To follow the design history of the tubular steel furniture and finally also to establish its importance it is helpful to examine it in the context of the tubular steel furniture that is grouped together in the above-mentioned patent.

The patent consists of a text, which explains the special features of Breuer's tubular steel furniture and an illustrated section with seven items of tubular steel furniture. The illustrated section (ill. 9) shows, along with the theatre chair, the stool, the backrest chair and the drawing-board stand for the Bauhaus building, a club armchair, a chair with armrests and a folding chair, mainly in perspective drawings. By whom are these drawings? Can it be assumed that they are by Marcel Breuer? As a rule images of objects in need of legal protection were drawn by patent draughtsmen with the aid of models. Obviously different

III. 2: Hall with furniture by Marcel Breuer,
photograph by Erich Consemüller, 1927.



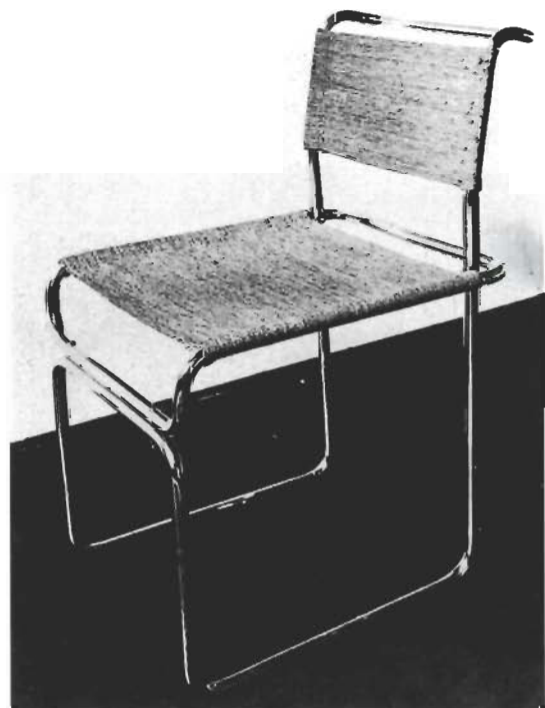
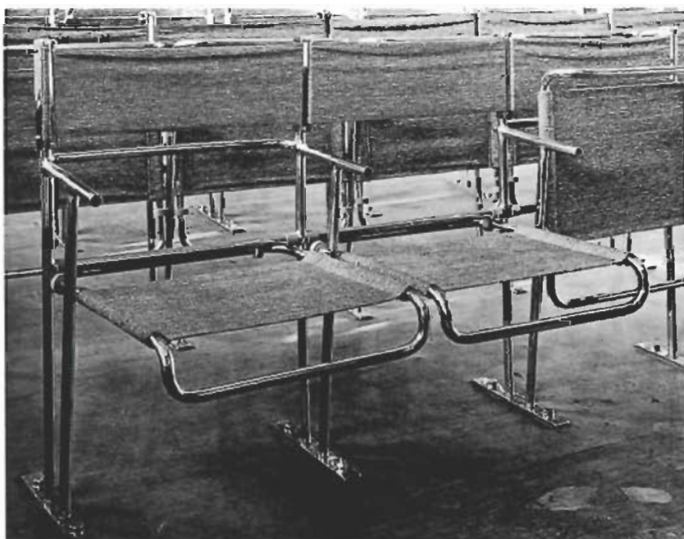
III. 3: Dining room with furniture by Marcel Breuer,
photograph by Erich Consemüller, 1927.



models were used to prepare the patent drawings. Axonometric drawings were presumably used for figures 1, 2, 5 and 6, but figure 3 was prepared from a hand drawing. Figures 4 and 5 are two-dimensional outline drawings of the items of furniture, presumably to make clear the construction principle and other special features of the drawings. Figure 7, in which the model was quite obviously a photograph (ill. 10) by Bauhaus student Erich Consemüller shows that the patent drawings actually were precise copies of their models. As we can assume that Breuer prepared the drawn versions himself, then figures 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6 must be previously unknown drawings of tubular steel furniture by his hand, preserved so to speak indirectly. This assumption is supported by the fact that axonometric drawings were often used at the Bauhaus. And as well as this, the significance of the patent drawings for the history of the tubular steel furniture is made particularly clear by the fact that the image of the chair with armrest (ill. 9, fig. 6) shows us a previously unknown design by Breuer. It does not appear in the familiar collections and there is no photograph of it.

The history of the patent can be traced from various documents in the Dessau

municipal archive and the Berlin Patent Office. Presumably the revision of the prototype shown at the exhibition was not complete when the Bauhaus set out to obtain legal protection for the club armchair in the form of ornamental or registered design protection or even a patent. It is not clear which version of the club armchair is in question here. In a letter dated 11 March 1926 to the Bauhaus's patent lawyers Karsten and Wiegand the Bauhaus asked whether the club armchair had a chance of "acquiring protection".⁵ The lawyers replied on 15 March 1926: "We should like to remark on this matter that the chair could be registered as a design or even be granted a patent if you can point out some *technical*⁶ progress, whether in terms of the construction method or the use of the chair." The Bauhaus responded to this on 31 March 1926 with the following description of the club armchair: "On the basis of the point you made we have asked Herr Breuer, the director of our joinery shop and designer of this chair about any particular characteristics that could lead to the grant of registered design status, and he provided the following information: 1) Construction: it is new for the chair to be welded together from nothing but standard tubes, which can be bought individually



III. 6: Student studio.

III. 7: Stool and coffee-table, 1926.

III. 8: Drawing-board stand, 1926.



from a factory. Thus the chair needs only to be welded together on the spot. It is also intended to be made up of 2 sections that can be taken apart or slid into each other, so that it can be dispatched with particular ease. 2) Use: particularly important here is firstly that the chair is very light, as it is made of tubes that are drawn without seams, which has probably never been done before, and it is also suitable for very heavy use, as it is very solid by nature. Something else entirely new is the addition of a padded armrest to the sides, while hitherto such fabric rests were used only as back supports, and sometimes also for covering seats."

It emerges from the lawyers letter of 14 April 1926 that the points listed gave reason to hope for registered design status or even a patent; but first some obscure points arising from Breuer's description had to be clarified. However, the Bauhaus never answered the points raised. Four months later, on 10 August 1926, the Bauhaus's patent lawyers wrote to say that they assumed nothing more was to be done about this matter. This concluded the correspondence between the Bauhaus and the patent lawyers about the "new club armchair registration". Presumably the reason that the Bauhaus stopped negotiating with the lawyers is to be sought with Marcel Breuer himself, who probably wanted to acquire legal protection for his club armchair independently of the Bauhaus, so that he could retain the rights to his design for himself. But Breuer was not able to protect his club armchair in the form of a patent in Germany, as he had already shown it at an exhibition in Dessau in spring 1926 and thus "legal protection was no longer available on grounds of open preliminary use or distribution".⁷ But with the patent introduced here Breuer was able to acquire a patent registration for tubular steel furniture in France.

How should the tubular steel furniture in this patent be dated? The question is significant to the extent that revised versions of the tubular steel furniture types depicted there were already on sale by the "Standard Möbel"⁸ company founded by Marcel Breuer and Kalman Lengyel at the turn of the years 1926/27. On 13 September 1926 Marcel Breuer successfully applied for regis-

tered design status in his own name for a group of "tubular steel furniture".⁹ But the entry in the register gives neither the type nor the number of items involved in this protected metal furniture. Christopher Wilk mentions that the registration of registered design status of 13 September 1926 protected a stool, a club armchair, a foldable club armchair, a chair, a version of the same chair with armrests, a theatre seat and a drawing-board stand.¹⁰ But his list does not make it clear which versions of the design this refers to. The patent of 12 September 1927 provides an answer to this question. The tubular steel furniture illustrated there agrees with the seven types of furniture mentioned by Wilk. Consequently the furniture shown in the French patent must be identical with those registered as a German design on 13 September 1926.¹¹ Thus the design work for the tubular steel furniture illustrated in the patent concluded on 13 September 1926 at the latest, just under three months before the Bauhaus opened on 4 December.¹²

How did the design process evolve for this group of tubular steel furniture? This question among others is significant as Marcel Breuer used it to arrive at the important invention of tubular steel runners for the tubular steel furniture and also a solution for various construction problems for the furniture. It is scarcely possible to reconstruct Breuer's early experiments with metal furniture.¹³ He presumably started some time in 1925 with work on a piece of furniture using tubular steel. He was turned down by Adler, and then approached Mannesmann, who supplied him with tubular steel so that he could work on his designs with the assistance of a metalworker.¹⁴ In this context, a master metalworker called Karl Körner employed by Junkers is mentioned in the literature.¹⁵ Bauhaus member Marianne Brandt also noted the involvement of the Junkers factory in the tubular steel experiments.¹⁶ Additionally, the name of the Dessau art metalwork master Georg Flechtner also crops up in this context.¹⁷ The earliest written information about the results of this experiment is in the form of a diary entry by Ise Gropius dated 17 January 1926: "breuer exhibition in the kunsthalle.

great interest from all sides. discussion of the new nickel-plated steel chair in the afternoon."¹⁸ In all probability the chair mentioned by Ise Gropius is illustrated in a photograph by Lucia Moholy (ill. 11).¹⁹ We can assume that his chair, generally called the "prototype" or "first model" in the literature is the predecessor of the club armchair illustrated in the patent (ill. 9, fig. 2).

Other information on design history can be taken from the design and structural characteristics of the tubular furniture itself. It is generally constructed from welded or screwed tubular crosses and several socket connections that join the individual tubes with the aid of a bolt and two round-headed slotted screws. The positioning of these socket connections depends both on statics and also on design considerations. Socket connections were needed mainly for structural and technical reasons. They also made it possible to dismantle the furniture, which was important for fitting the strips of fabric, for example. In his early tubular steel furniture Breuer used either black-painted wood or strips of grey fabric. The tubes were either nickel-plated or bronzed, according to their destination, before they were finally assembled.

The prototype (ill. 11) was doubtless the starting-point for the design process. While the problem of fitting the strips of fabric had already been solved here, unlike the club armchair in the patent drawing it still has four legs. The question arises of which piece of furniture led to the invention of the runners. Did they really arise, as has previously been assumed,²⁰ from a reworking of the prototype? Important information can be derived from the construction of the prototype. It consists of 18 welded tubular crosses and at least two socket connections, which can be seen on the front, protruding tube of the seat. The particular feature of these socket connections is that they have no screws. But all the known successor models have socket connections that are additionally fixed by a bolt with two screws at the point where the two tubes intersect. As well as this, a photograph by Lucia Moholy has preserved a view of a stool (ill. 13) whose socket connections are also on the outer section of the runners, and also have no screws.

III. 9: Illustrated section of the patent dated 12 September 1927
(patent title added by the author).
III. 10: Folding chair, 1926.

BREVET D'INVENTION.

Gr. 0. — Cl. 4.

N° 640.760

Mobilier en tubes métalliques.

M. BREUER résident en Allemagne.

Demandé le 12 septembre 1927, à 14^h 12^m, à Paris.

Délivré le 3 avril 1928 — Publié le 21 juillet 1928.

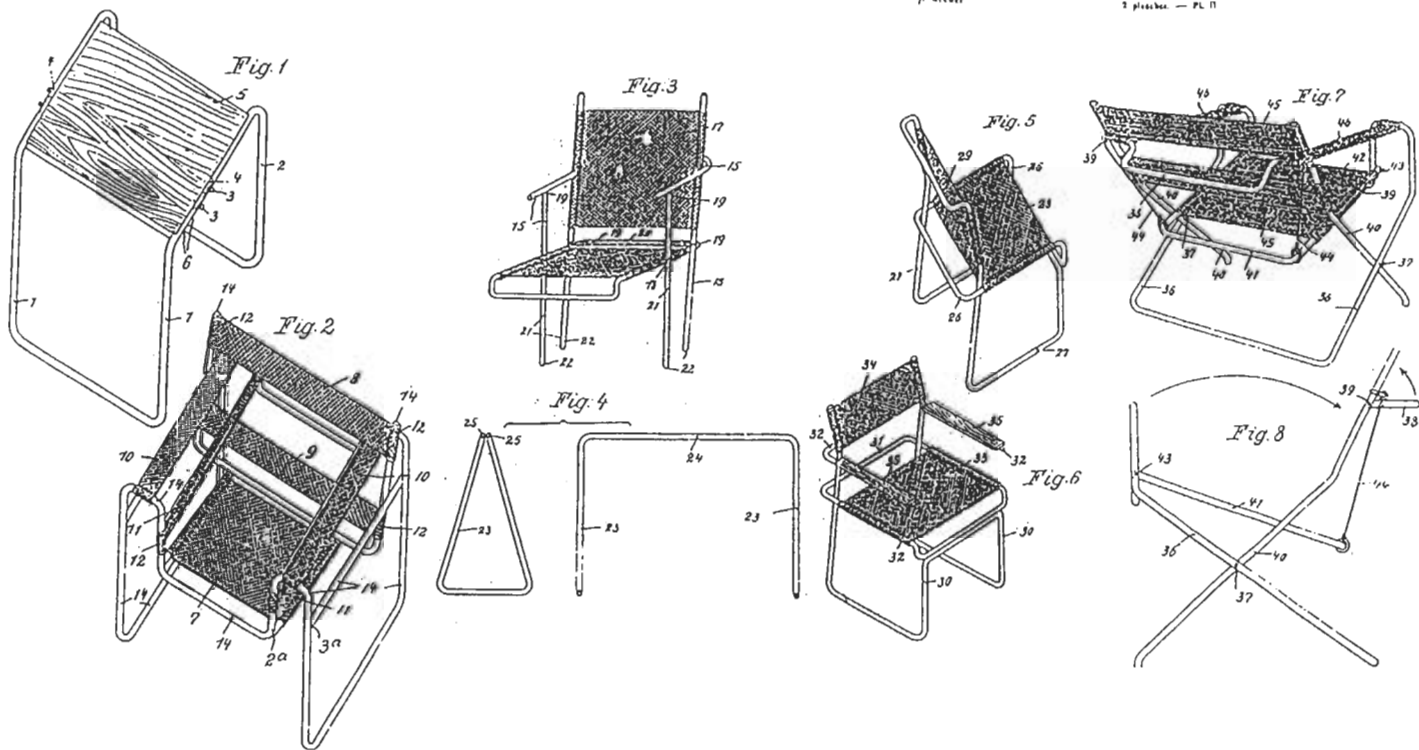
(Le demandeur de brevets déposés en Allemagne les 13 septembre 1927 et 15 mars 1928; —
Déclaration de dépôt.)

M. Breuer

2 planches. — Pl. I

J. Breuer

2 planches. — Pl. II





The construction of this stool is unusual for Breuer's early furniture in that the socket connections of all the stools that have survived in collections or that were photographed have screws, and are in the middle of the runners.²¹ Thus the socket connections in this stool are identical with those of the prototype. Given the comparable construction, it seems reasonable to assume that both pieces of furniture must have been created dependently on each other to a certain extent. This observation could lead to the important conclusion for the history of the tubular steel furniture that the runners were invented for the stool. If this assumption is correct, then the runners could have been transferred from the stool to the version of the club armchair shown in the patent. For this reason alone the stool would be important not only for its design, but also for reasons of development history. Thus the prototype and the stool are probably the joint starting-point for the tubular steel furniture illustrated in the patent. This assumption is supported not least by the fact that the stool is placed first in the illustrated section of the patent and the club armchair second. It is conceivable that the furniture was arranged in chronological order. If this is true, then it supports the above assumption that the runners were transferred from the stool to the club armchair. This would explain the placing of

the stool before the club armchair in the patent. As the arrangement of the other types also suggests, the sequence of the tubular steel furniture in the patent must in fact follow development history criteria to a large extent.

A comparison between the patent illustrations and the types listed serves to confirm this. The club armchair that emerged from a reworking of the prototype (ill. 12) is relatively complicated in its construction, but this is not shown in the patent illustration (ill. 9, fig. 2). In literature²² it has previously been assumed that this version of the club armchair consisted entirely of tubes that had been welded together. But this ignores the fact that the construction includes several socket connections with screws. For example, a specimen of this type in the Bauhaus Dessau collection shows a total of eight screwed socket joints. In the case of this club armchair, and as far as we can see in the case of the club armchairs featured in the photographs as well they are largely concealed under the strips of fabric; a fact that reveals an important feature of Breuer's design intention. Only two of the socket connections are not hidden, and these are placed on the lower section of the backrest, apparently for statical reasons. The connections make it possible to dismantle the chair into four parts in total. Breuer's description of the club armchair



contradicts this; it reached the patent lawyers indirectly in the Bauhaus's letter of 31 March 1926. According to this description, the armchair is made up "of 2 sections that can be taken apart or slid into each other". So far no example fitting this description is known.

In all probability Breuer designed the theatre chair, the stand for drawing-boards and the chair with a backrest for the Bauhaus building. As a comparison between the drawing of the theatre chair (ill. 9, fig. 3) and the version that he constructed (ill. 4) shows, Breuer considered two possibilities for fitting the fabric back, until he finally decided to stretch it between two metal bearers.²³ Thus the patent drawing can be seen as a preliminary design of the theatre chair for the Bauhaus building. The illustration of the backrest chair (ill. 9, fig. 5) differs from the version that was produced for the Bauhaus building (ill. 6) only in the back leg tubes, which rise at an obtuse angle. Nothing can be ascertained precisely about the way the two versions relate in terms of time.²⁴

The arrangement of the tubular steel furniture in the patent according to their development history is again made clear by the sequence of the chair with a backrest and the chair with an armrest. Closer consideration of the armrest chair design (ill. 9, fig. 6) shows a constructive weakness

that can be explained by the fact that it was very probably designed on the basis of the chair with a backrest. The tube-crosses of armrest and back are obviously intended to be screwed together, which would have meant that the armrests would not have been able to take much weight. If these tube-crosses had been welded, the arch of the armrest would have been smaller than the arch of the seat-tubes underneath it. But this technically preferable construction would have meant an unsatisfactory design. We can therefore assume that the chair with an armrest, because of the faulty armrest structure, was built, if at all, only as a trial model or in very small numbers. As has already been mentioned, the chair with armrest has not survived either in reality or in a photograph.

The group concludes with the folding chair made up of a system of five tubes (ill. 9, fig. 7,8). It acquires its characteristic shape from front and back legs interlinked in the form of a cross, a seat suspended in the rear area and a piece bent at the back, with the whole system arranged in such a way that the armrests tighten when weight is applied to them. The chair can be folded only after the suspension is released. Like the club armchair and the armrest chair, the folding chair was not part of the Bauhaus building's permanent furnishings. But for reasons of design history, it

cannot be separated from the group as all the tubular steel furniture illustrated in the patent are related in various ways, as will be discussed in more detail later.

Consideration of the available sources shows that the manufacturing process for the tubular steel furniture was much more complicated than previously assumed.²⁵ It emerges from the "inventory of the new school building at 12 Friedrichsallee"²⁶ of 1926 that at least seven firms were involved in manufacturing the tubular steel furniture. But it is not possible to work out from the inventory exactly what the individual firms did. It is possible, however, to reconstruct an approximate production sequence for the tubular steel furniture with the help of a prospectus for the Dessau Bauhaus²⁷ dated probably 1927, in which several of the firms involved advertised. According to this Mannesmann supplied the precision steel tubes, the screws needed for fitting the furniture together came from the Dessau installation firm Kolb & Co. and also from a "metal screw factory" that cannot be identified more closely. Probably the tubes were cut and bent in Georg Flechtner's²⁸ firm. The Dessau "Gürtlerei und Vernickelungsanstalt Krell" undertook the nickel-plating of the tubes. It is not known where the tubular steel furniture intended for the studio building was bronzed. Presumably yet more firms were involved in assembling the tubular steel furniture, including the Dessau building firms Rätz and Kolb & Co. The fabric for the tubular steel furniture was provided by the Berlin firm of Teppich Bursch. Thus the furnishing fabric was not the polished yarn fabric developed in the Bauhaus weaving shop, as researchers²⁹ have generally assumed. The inventory does not show how the above-mentioned Dessau Junkers factory and their employee, master metalworker Karl Körner were involved in manufacturing the tubular steel furniture. There is also no evidence that tubular steel furniture was produced in the Bauhaus's own workshops. Probably about 500 pieces of tubular steel furniture were produced to designs by Marcel Breuer in 1926.³⁰ The fact that at least seven firms were involved in manufacturing the tubular steel furniture clearly shows the difficulties that had to

be overcome in making Marcel Breuer's early tubular steel furniture a reality. The manufacturing process reflects the experimental character and the newness of Marcel Breuer's tubular steel furniture.

Can the tubular steel furniture illustrated in the patent, most of which counted as part of the Bauhaus's established furniture, in fact be considered as a coherent group? It has already been suggested that the tubular steel furniture illustrated in the patent are related to each other, and that this relationship can be illustrated by comparisons with the versions by Standard Möbel that emerged from the tubular steel furniture in the patent. The tubular steel furniture in the patent and the Standard Möbel furniture differ only in technical details. The patent models in the Bauhaus-Archiv Berlin collection and those in the Dessau Bauhaus collection have tubes 22 mm in diameter, while the "Standard Möbel" versions have tubes only 20 mm in diameter. Furthermore, the patent tubular steel furniture built were assembled with slotted screws, while the Standard Möbel models used hexagon head screws.³¹

The differences between the tubular steel furniture in the patent and the Standard Möbel versions indicate a change in the design and construction principle, as can be seen particularly clearly from the backrest chair. The patent version executed (ill. 5) consists of two closed tubular loops. In contrast with this the worked-over backrest chair by "Standard Möbel" (ill. 14) consists of an open system of tubes that are placed together and connected only by screws. These are two design principles that require an entirely different attitude to design. The principle of the closed tubular loops can be seen equally clearly in the versions illustrated in the patent of the stool, the drawing-board stand and the armrest chair. And traces of this design principle can also be detected in the club armchair. (ill. 12). The requirement of a closed tubular system is fulfilled by the welded tube crosses and visually supported by concealing the socket connections under the strips of fabric. Even the theatre chair (ill. 4) has comparable characteristics. Only the folding chair (ill. 10) points forward to the design and structural character-

Ill. 13: Stool, 1925 (?).

Ill. 14: Chair with backrest by the Standard Möbel company, 1926/27.

istics for Standard Möbel with its function-related screwed tube-crosses. Thus Breuer was visibly concerned to develop his early designs from tubular loops and closed tubular systems. This observation is confirmed by the prototype (ill. 11) and the stool (ill. 13), which is presumably closely related to this.

Why did Breuer avoid open systems with tubes that were placed together and then connected only by screws, thus abandoning an important expressive device? Is one of the things that this shows Breuer's attempt to protect his early tubular steel furniture from undue criticism? This is a speculative question that seems justified by Breuer's remark³² quoted at the beginning of this essay. Or can only constructional and design motives be considered in terms of the design principles for his early tubular steel furniture? The armrest chair, which has come down to us only in the patent drawing (ill. 9, fig. 6), shows that it was mainly design motives that were at the forefront of Breuer's mind during the design process. This model makes the correlation between design and construction visible. It seems that it was not possible to find a constructively correct solution for the armrest fastening that could be made to fit in with design criteria; neither a welded joint nor a screw connection would have been satisfactory here. This must ultimately have hindered realizing the chair. As already mentioned, the design of the armrest chair was clearly linked with that of the backrest chair. Apparently adapting the tube-loop system was so much in the foreground of the design process that very little attention was paid to whether it could be realized. The fact that he still illustrated the armrest chair in the patent shows Breuer's concern to be able to present a complete group of furniture.

This marked concern to use tube loops and closed tubular systems is thus in fact motivated mainly by design. We must assume that Breuer saw them as core themes for his early tubular steel furniture. It is difficult to imagine that Breuer was not very interested in these design principles. What is the background to Breuer's interest in the design principle? Were the tube loops and the closed tubular systems intended to demonstrate the principal features of the new furniture



construction material, which could be produced seamlessly in any length required? Breuer himself had evaluated the qualities of tubular steel as a material very positively in several texts.³³ In his essay *Metallmöbel* he even placed it higher than wood: "Steel, an almost homogeneous material, is much more adaptable to a resistant shape (cross-sections: e.g. tube) than wood, which is limited by its grain and uneven qualities in mechanical terms."³⁴ And so had Breuer attempted to distinguish his early tubular steel furniture from older wooden furniture by using tube-loops and closed tubular systems? Certainly the material qualities of tubular steel had some significance. But they will

not have been the crucial element for the design of the furniture. Earlier bentwood furniture by Thonet³⁵ and Walter Gropius's ideas in terms of design theory must have had far more influence in Breuer's early tubular steel furniture, but there is insufficient space to consider this here.

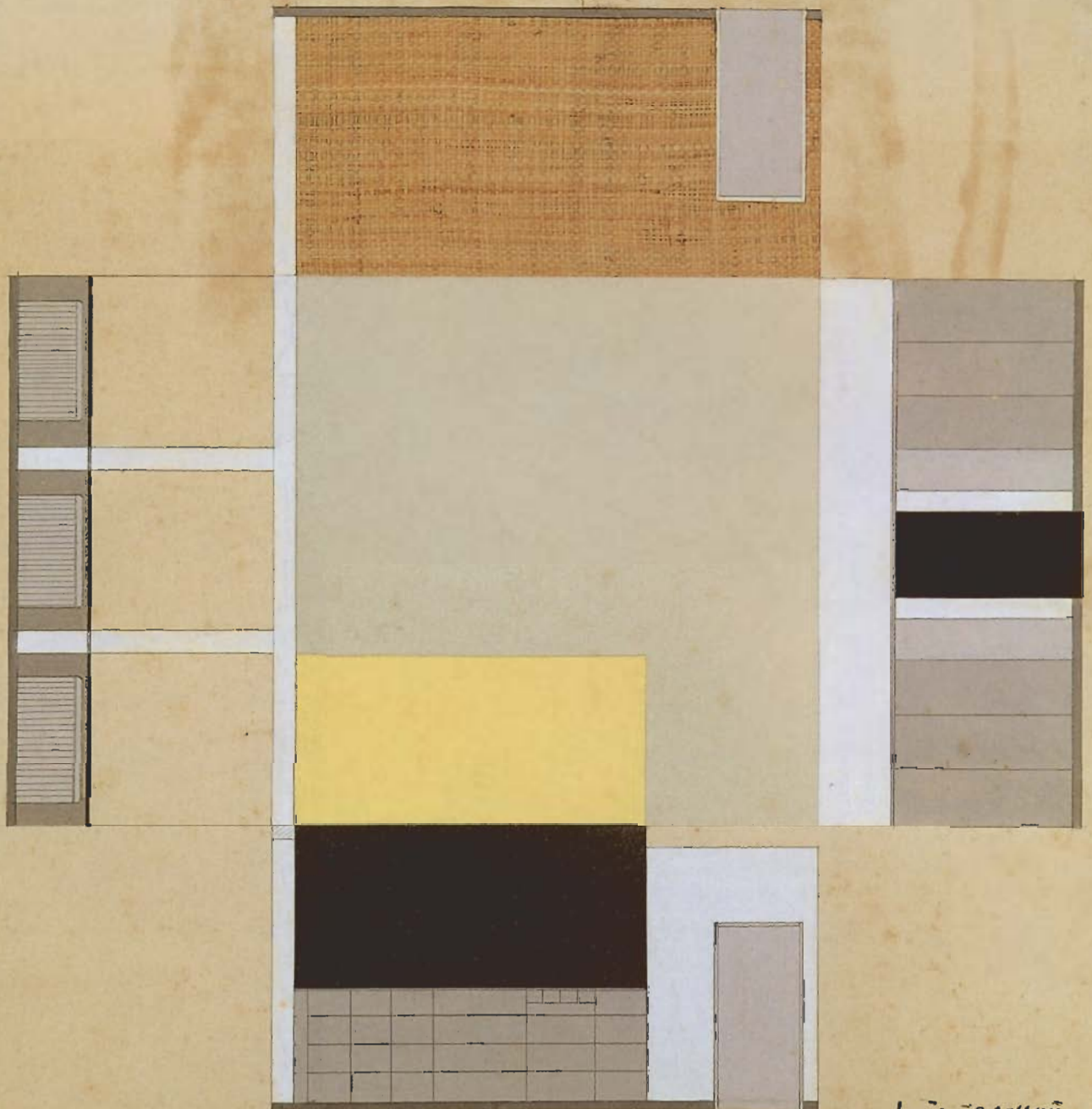
- 1 This essay is a revised version of a chapter by Robin Krause called *Die Ausstattung des Bauhausgebäudes in Dessau*, master's dissertation, Freie Universität Berlin, 1997.
- 2 Marcel Breuer, *Metallmöbel*, in: Werner Graeff, *Innenräume*, Stuttgart 1928, p. 133ff.
- 3 For the visual qualities of the tubular steel furniture: Sigfried Giedion, *Die Herrschaft der Mechanisierung*, Frankfurt am Main 1987, (Oxford 1948), p. 536; Giulio Carlo Argan, *Gropius und das Bauhaus*, Hamburg 1962, (Turin 1951), p. 39; J. v. Geest and O. Mäcel, *Stühle aus Stahl*, Cologne 1980, p. 20ff.
- 4 French patent for Marcel Breuer's metal furniture, German Patent Office in Berlin, no. 640760. The patent was issued in France on 12 September 1927 and consists of a textual section describing the particular features of Breuer's tubular steel furniture and an illustrated section with seven different types.
- 5 Stadtarchiv Dessau, Akten des Magistrats zu Dessau, SB/18. The subsequent quotations from correspondence between the Bauhaus and the patent lawyers Dr. W. Karsten und Dr. C. Wiegand are also taken from these documents.
- 6 The lawyers' italics.
- 7 Letter from the lawyers to the Bauhaus dated 15. 3. 1926, Stadtarchiv Dessau.
- 8 See reprint of the first *Standard Möbel* catalogue (spring 1927?) publ. by Tecta, Lauenförde 1992; other illustrations: Alexander v. Vegesack, *Deutsche Stahlrohrmöbel. 650 Modelle aus Katalogen von 1927-1958*, Munich 1986, pp. 30-44.
- 9 German Patent Office Berlin, *Gebrauchsmusterrolle* 1926, A-B, no. 964585.
- 10 Christopher Wilk, *Marcel Breuer. Furniture and Interieurs*, New York 1981, p. 52. In a note (note 35, p. 188) Wilk mentions the French patent of 12 September 1927. As Wilk lists the various furniture types, but neither shows them nor discusses them in detail, we must assume that he had either not seen the illustrations in the French patent or had not realized their significance.
- 11 The German registered design dating from 13 September 1926 is mentioned in the title of the French patent. It is not surprising that Breuer submitted the drawing from the the German registered design dating from 13 September 1926 when applying for a patent in France, even though each piece of furniture was already in production as a revised version, as he was patenting not the design of the furniture, but the way in which it was constructed. Further, the French patent mentions the registration of the German patent dated 26 March 1927 for the folding chair. Reprint of the drawing and the patent text for the folding chair: Wulf Herzogenrath (ed.), *Bauhaus Utopien. Arbeiten auf Papier*, Stuttgart 1988, p. 140.
- 12 Thus the previous dating of the folding chair to 1927 has to be corrected: Magdalena Droste/ Manfred Ludewig, *Marcel Breuer Design*, Cologne 1992, p. 65.
- 13 Breuer himself has stated that he carried out experiments not just with tubular steel, but also with aluminium: op. cit. note 2, p. 133.
- 14 op. cit. note 10, p. 37.
- 15 Helmut Erfurth, *Der Stahlrohrstuhl – sein Entwicklungsweg durch das Industriedesign*, Dessau 1986, p. 36; Werner Möller and O. Mäcel, *Ein Stuhl macht Geschichte*, Munich 1992, p. 51.
- 16 op. cit. note 15, p. 10. S. Günther, *Thonet Stahlrohr-Möbel*, (reprint of the 1930/31 card index), Weil am Rhein 1989, p. 2.

- 17 op. cit. note 12, p. 13.
- 18 Ise Gropius, diary entry for 17 January 1926. The diary is in the Bauhaus-Archiv Berlin. At the time of the Breuer exhibition the Bauhaus masters had temporary studios in the Kunsthalle in Dessau: Christine Engemann and Christian Schädlich, *Die Bauhausbauten in Dessau*, Berlin 1991, p. 12. There is no mention of the Breuer exhibition described by Ise Gropius in the *Anhalter Anzeiger* and the *Volksblatt für Anhalt*, the major Dessau daily papers. We must therefore assume that it was an internal Bauhaus exhibition of the Breuer's furniture that was not open to the public.
- 19 This photograph was presumably first published in July 1926 in an edition of the magazine "Offset" designed by the Bauhaus with the terse description: "Marcel Breuer, Stahlrohrstuhl, vernickelt mit Sitzfläche und Gurten aus Stoff (1925)": *Offset. Buch- und Werbekunst*, (1926), issue 7. There is no evidence that the photograph was published earlier. The whereabouts of the club armchair it illustrates are unknown. Helmut Erfurth states that it was dismantled: op. cit. note 15, p. 22.
- 20 op. cit. note 12, p. 15.
- 21 In the illustration of the stool (ill. 10, fig. 1) the unusual positioning of the socket connection in the upper run of the tubular system must have been introduced by patent draughtsmen to give a clear example of the principle of the screwed socket connections for all the furniture.
- 22 op. cit. note 15, p. 22. Wulf Herzogenrath and Stefan Kraus (ed.), Erich Consemüller. *Fotografien Bauhaus Dessau*, Munich 1989, ill. 105. op. cit. note 12, p. 15.
- 23 Ludwig Mies van der Rohe used the same fixing method for his tubular steel furniture designed in mid-1927: Ludwig Gläser, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe. *Furniture and Furniture Drawings*, New York 1977, p. 21 ff.
- 24 Christian Wolsdorff states that the type with the back tubes at an obtuse angle was already the reworked version: Christian Wolsdorff, *Tischlerei und Ausbauwerkstatt*, in: *Bauhaus-Archiv (publ.), Sammlungs-Katalog*, 3. ed. Berlin 1987, p. 91.
- 25 op. cit. note 10, p. 37. op. cit. note 15, pp. 10, 22, 36. op. cit. note 16, p. 2. op. cit. note 12, p. 13; op. cit. note 15, p. 51.
- 26 See "inventaraufstellung des schulneubaues friedrichsallee 12", *Stadtarchiv Dessau*. The firms listed were taken from this inventory.
- 27 Bauhaus Dessau. Hochschule für Gestaltung (prospectus), Dessau, no year (1927?), Bauhaus-Archiv Berlin, inv. no. 2435.
- 28 Magdalena Droste has already mentioned Georg Flechtner's involvement in producing the tubular steel furniture: op. cit. note 12, p. 13.
- 29 Magdalena Droste, *Die Werkstatt für Weberei*, in: *Bauhaus-Archiv Berlin (ed.), Experiment Bauhaus*, Berlin 1988, p. 96. op. cit. note 22, ill. nos. 107, 109, 113. Ingrid Radewaldt, *Bauhaustextilien 1919-1933*, Diss. phil., Münster/Westfalen 1986, p. 342. The polished yarn fabric was not developed until later by Grete Reichardt, presumably in 1927.
- 30 Nikolaus Pevsner, quoted from: op. cit. note 29, p. 108.
- 31 There are only a few transitional models with details that deviate from these characteristics.
- 32 op. cit. note 2.
- 33 Reprint of the first *Standard Möbel* catalogue, op. cit. note 8; leaflet for *Standard Möbel* dating from 1928, reprinted in: Alexander v. Vegesack, op. cit. note 8 p. 32 ff. op. cit. note 2. Marcel Breuer, *Metallmöbel und moderne Räumlichkeit* (1928), quoted from *Neues Bauen Neues Gestalten. Das Neue Frankfurt/Die Neue Stadt*. Magazine published between 1926 and 1933, selected and introduced by Heinz Hirdina, publ. by Amt für Industrielle Formgestaltung, Dresden 1984, p. 210.
- 33 op. cit. note 2, p. 134.
- 34 Sigfried Giedion identifies links between the bentwood furniture and the tubular steel furniture, op. cit. note 3, p. 5.
- 35 op. cit. note 3, p. 12. op. cit. note 15, pp. 30/31.

Lutz Schöbe

Black and white or colour?

Spatial design in the Bauhaus building



*baugestaltung
raumgestaltung
Schöbe*

"A giant light-cube: the new Bauhaus building. Later, in blue sky and bright sunlight, the building still concentrates all the available light and brightness. Glass, glass, and where there are walls they radiate their dazzling white. I have never seen a light reflector like this. And the weight of the walls is cancelled out by these two factors, by the high glass walls, which show the building's light iron structure unadorned, and by the radiant white ... The gigantic building makes a special, almost unforgettable impression at night, if all the rooms are illuminated, as they were on the opening day, and thus form a light-cube, squared and framed throughout on the outside by the iron structure."¹ This contemporary impression alludes to fundamental design features, including recurrent references to light, which was given function and significance in all its manifestations, and in combination with colour, as a space-creating element in its own right.

The effect of the "giant light-cube" derives fundamentally from external and internal colouring based on a broken shade of white. This colour, even more than pure white, reflects both natural and artificial light in such a way that the outlines of the Bauhaus, harmonizing with the accentuation of colour brought about by the formation of shadows, are accentuated in a most subtle way. This produces a sharpness of line and a clarity that in combination with the polished plate glass stimulated Rudolf Arnheim to say that here the will to have cleanness, clarity and magnanimity had won a victory.² The rough grey plaster with which the base area, set back particularly in the workshop building,³ and the south staircase were treated adds something more to this play of light and shade. This design aspect also creates an impression of lightness, even of floating, for the quite big buildings.

The exterior of the iron structure of the workshop building and all the metal windows were primed, then painted in an anthracite-coloured oil-based paint. Thus even now the window profiles and the window glass fuse in daylight into a single surface that stands out darkly against the white walls. But from the inside precisely the re-

verse effect occurred: because all the window-frames and profiles were painted light beige,⁴ these and the light apertures were clearly intended to fuse together into a bright wall of light. With the intention of illuminating the workshops in particular to the greatest possible extent, the window profiles and the other "solid" walls, functioned, even under artificial light, as an indirect "light source" with their light, reflecting colour (when the white, floor-length linen curtains were not drawn, thus taking over the function). Then the grid effect, clearly visible from the outside, produced by the contrast of window profile and light streaming outwards, was reversed in the interior by the window surfaces, which seem dark here, in contrast with the beige window profiles. This observation supports the thesis suggesting that Gropius preferred flat-surface oriented architectural designs, but nevertheless very probably saw himself in a position (contrary to Paul Westheim's statement) to feel in terms of three dimensions and corporeality and to use flat surfaces to form spaces and bodies that interlink dynamically with the surrounding space.⁵

Gropius's affinity with flat surfaces can also be seen in the way in which he sometimes combines windows into bands by painting the wall surfaces between them black, and thus again produces horizontally accentuated surfaces that are balanced out by the building's vertical tendency. The best examples of this are the studio building, the bridge and the exterior of the single-storey intermediate building linking the workshop building to the studio building. In combination with the base-storey design, this reveals a principle that Gropius applied in other buildings as well: "The balance of solid bodies and voids is calculated ideally to restore the quality of the flat surface as a geometrical unit, as a formal location between two unlimited spatial extents."⁶ The fact that Gropius was here in danger of increasingly formalizing the pronounced form of bands of windows through the skilful use of (usually black) paint should be mentioned here in passing.⁷

As frequently happens in Gropius's work, the Bauhaus building shows a contradiction

between reticent colouring outside and a more sophisticated approach in the interior. This suggests that in terms of design method the colour scheme was not a direct part of the design process, but developed subsequently for the architecture. Walter Gropius commissioned Hinnerk Scheper and the wall painting department to develop and implement colour schemes for the interior and exterior of the Bauhaus building. Involving other people directly in the work or the design process was entirely in tune with Gropius's ideas of a "collective form of work", which he had been trying to practise since the twenties – within certain limits.⁸ The ultimate external colour scheme for the Bauhaus building, which shows considerable deviations from Scheper's design, can be seen as an indication that Gropius's "perception of teamwork did not admit any real equal rights".⁹ He made this comment about it himself: "Professional fields have become so complex that individuals are no longer in a position to know and master everything, they need to work in a team. But one thing is important in our artistic profession: the person in charge of a building project must have an absolute right to decide whether he takes the others' advice or not, and his sovereignty for the particular task must remain sacrosanct."¹⁰ So Hinnerk Scheper's colour schemes for the Dessau Bauhaus were designed against this background; Scheper was commissioned in 1925 as a so-called young master to become director of the wall painting workshop and to build up an appropriate two-section teaching and apprentice business for it.¹¹ Even in the preparatory stages for this he had been able to develop and test his colour concept in buildings by Walter Gropius,¹² but most importantly he was involved in planning the complex colour schemes for the university clinics in Münster in Westphalia. Here his designs were mostly conceived for completed buildings or detailed plans.¹³ Finally in Dessau, almost all the Bauhaus buildings, designed in the most part by Walter Gropius, were painted according to colour schemes by Walter Gropius or the wall painting department or Scheper. As well as the Bauhaus building and the masters' houses these included the Törten housing estate, the municipal labour office

and the Kornhaus on the Elbe, designed by Carl Fieger, a close associate of Walter Gropius. But as well as this, various historical buildings in Dessau had colour schemes designed by Scheper,¹⁴ and others commissioned colour schemes, e.g. the Galerie Neumann in Berlin (1925), the Galerie Neue Kunst Fides in Dresden (1926) and the Folkwangmuseum in Essen (1926–1929).

These colour schemes reveal Scheper's basic attitude to the broad theme of colour design in architecture. The theoretical background to this was Goethe's colour theory, but also Wilhelm Ostwald's colour rules, which appear to be standardized and suitable for building colour design because of their lavish spectrum of shades. The fundamentally new feature of Scheper's colour design was that colour in building should be allotted a servant, structuring function. Architecture should not be covered with a decorative outer skin, but should be supported in its fundamental structure. Scheper himself described his concept of three-dimensional colour design in retrospect as follows: "It is not so much a matter of personal taste, in other words aesthetically determined, as bound by formal and technical laws – its own, and those of the building to which it belongs ... The principle of three-dimensional colour design must therefore be governed by the basic architectural form. Colour balance is determined by the proportions of the quantity and intensity of pure colours to neutral tones. Incorrect proportions destroy the statics, and correct proportions create a new, clear space, perceived as a conscious architectural structure ... Colour should not have the effect of a disguise – it must be like a quality of the architecture ... Colour's most important function in a space is its psychological effect on people. Colour can be cheering or depressing, expand the space or constrict it, seem fresh and enlivening or gloomy and tiring."¹⁵ "The world of our colours ... was clear, light-hearted, pure ... And the way they were used in a space was also new: coloured ceilings with light walls – walls and ceilings in one shade – the front and back walls of a room in light-dark contrasts with the side walls."¹⁶ These principles of colour design for architecture, as an expression of

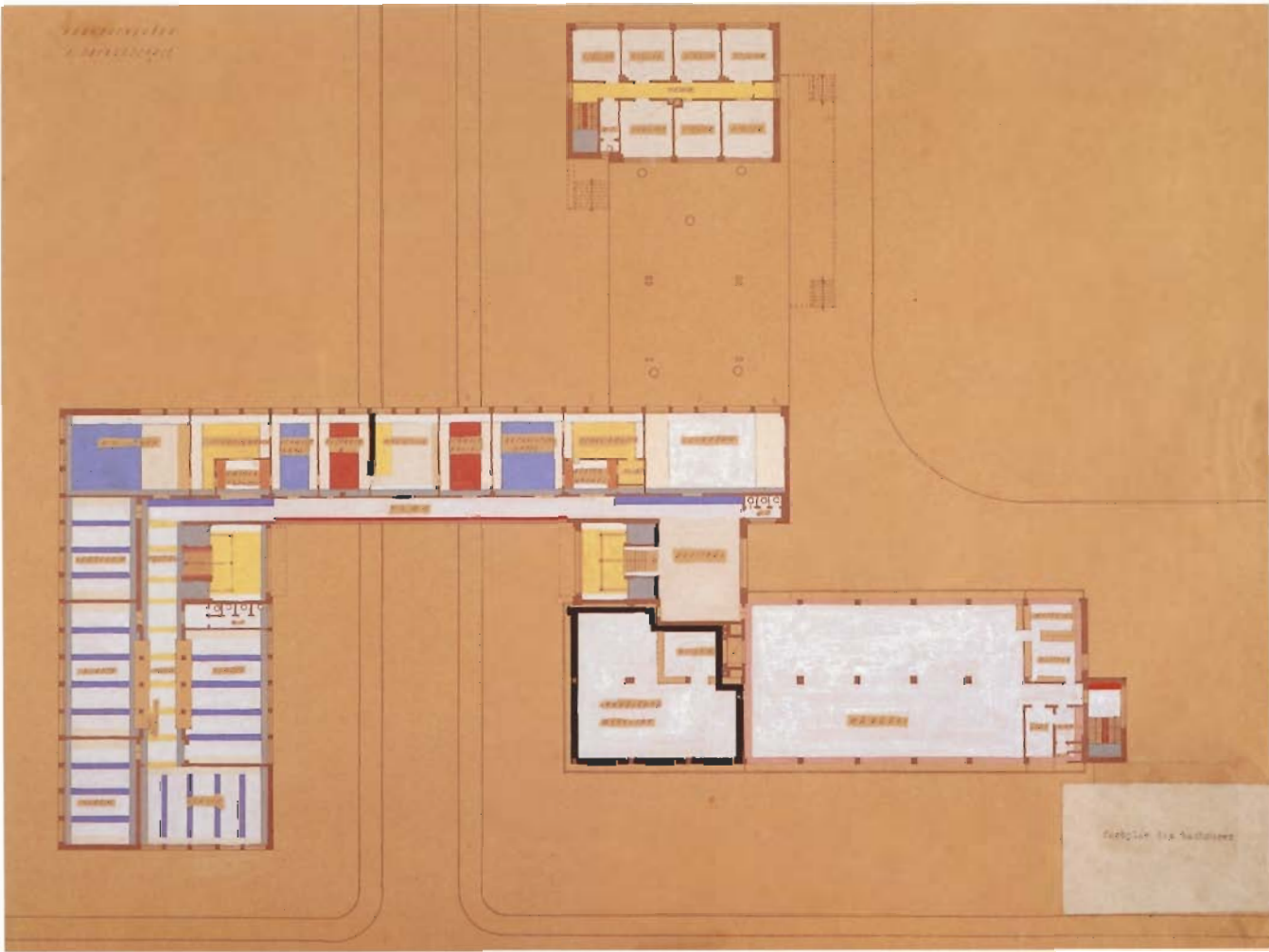
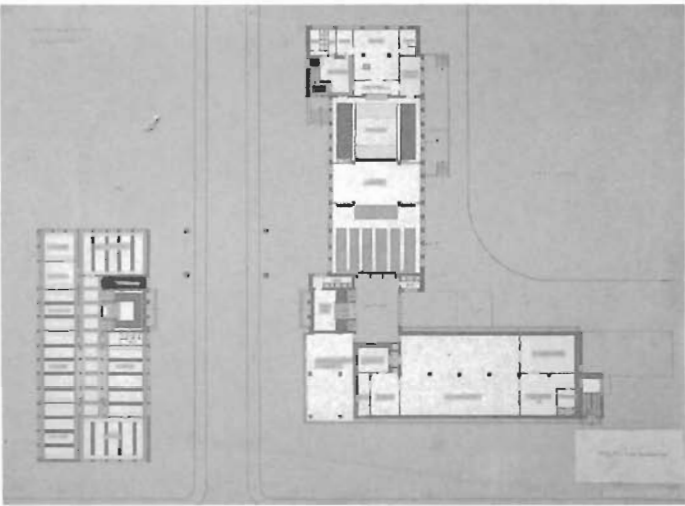
a turn towards the constructive, purposeful, functional in three-dimensional design, provide us with a key for understanding the complex colour planning that Scheper undertook for the Bauhaus building. A total of nine colour plans have survived, executed in tempera and indian ink, with some in the form of collages on blueprints, varying in size between 70 x 100 cm and 44.5 x 59 cm.¹⁷

If one looks through this bundle of papers it is soon clear that Scheper worked on the colour schemes for the Bauhaus in four phases, concentrating on particular themes. First of all there was a "Colour orientation plan for the Dessau Bauhaus". A second sequence of sheets, consisting of three blueprints with tempera colours, relate mainly to painting the ceilings. A third thematic group obviously consisted of several plans for painting the individual rooms and workshops.¹⁸ Of these apparently only one concretely space-related colour scheme has survived, though it is a spectacular one, that of the "Direktorium". Three other large-format sheets show, in elevations and views of all parts of the building, the "Attempt at coloured façade painting for the Dessau Bauhaus". Scheper probably first devised the coloured "Orientation plan", which he also called the "Organization plan", for the interior of the Bauhaus. The plan must have existed in at least two variants,¹⁹ though the difference between them lies only in the arrangement of the colour-space allocation legend and the lettering on the plan, one copy of which was obviously prepared as a printed for printing in the magazine *Offset*. This magazine also gives a pointer to the more precise dating of the "Coloured orientation plan". Its number 7 appeared as a special Bauhaus issue in July 1926. According to this the orientation plan must have been created to the first six months of 1926, but at the latest in June/July. The "Attempts at coloured façade painting" for the Bauhaus building were dated "Sept. 1926" by Scheper in at least one case.²⁰ The dating allows us to draw some conclusions about Scheper's approach to the design process, suggesting that he did his colour planning "from inside to outside".

The colour schemes that Scheper devised for the particular floors must have been completed at the same time as or shortly before the "Orientation plan", as the second section of the explanatory note on the "Orientation plan" refers to colour designs that were ready for execution: "Colour orientation plan for the Bauhaus in Dessau showing the order of the building complex as determined by its various functions in terms of colour. From the vestibule, arrows and lines in appropriate colours give directions to the workshops and departments. A distinction was made in the design between supporting and filling areas, thus clearly expressing the building's architectural tension. The spatial effect of the colour is enhanced by the use of different materials: smooth, polished, grainy and rough rendered areas, matt, dull and gloss paints, glass, metal, etc."²¹ Another indication that Scheper developed the coloured "Orientation plan" essentially as a preliminary to his subsequent colour planning for the Bauhaus can be seen in the allocation of individual colours to individual function areas, which was undertaken in the same way as the colour allocation for the Bauhaus workshops devised in 1925.²² Thus the stage workshop was allocated the colour blue, the metal workshop yellow, the joinery grey, wall painting purple, the print-shop orange, the weaving shop red and the foundation or preliminary teaching area black. This suggests that the allocation of colours on Scheper's orientation plan was undertaken by the designer of the working plans published in a typographically uniform version as information about the workshop; he is unknown. A stylistic comparison of the working plans for the workshops drawn up by that unknown author with the "Catalogue of patterns" also issued in 1925 as a loose leaf collection, suggest a certain closeness to Herbert Bayer's work as a typographical designer. Bayer, who was appointed head of the print workshop in Dessau, took over designing business stationery and other printed matter for the Bauhaus in 1925, a task previously performed by László Moholy-Nagy. Bayer used Moholy's handing of set text in particular and his design based on angles quite openly as a model.²³



Hinnerk Scheper, Colour plan for the ceilings in the Dessau Bauhaus, 1926, ground floor, 1st and 2nd floors.

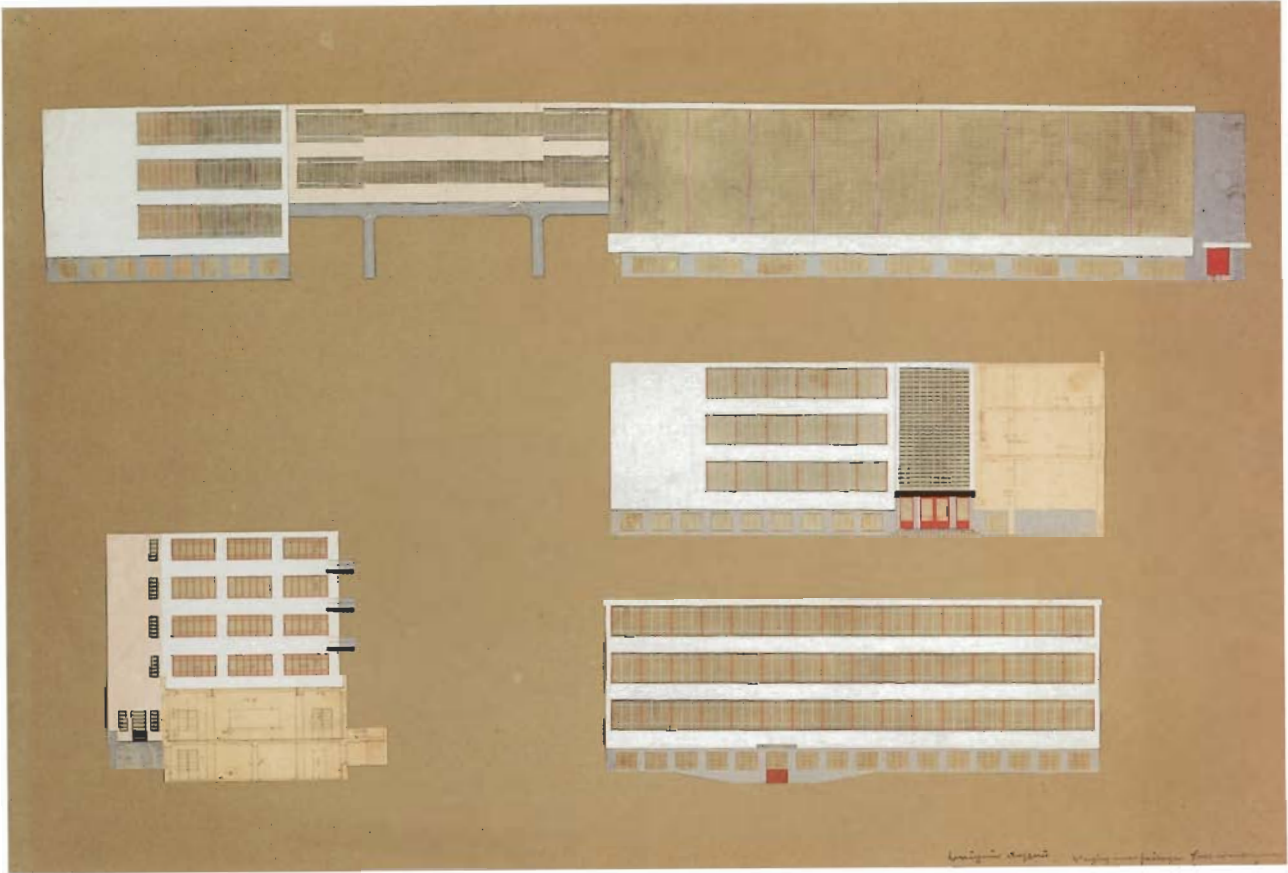


Ute Brüning points out that Hinnerk Scheper pursued the theme of "colour as a recognition sign", which is linked with the coloured design for the working plans, in the painting of the walls, and that these coloured signing systems finally even made their way into exhibition design, through Joost Schmidt.²⁴ With the exception of the library and of Gropius's architect's office, the architecture department from 1927, on the second floor of the bridge, Scheper's choice of colour to identify the individual workshops and other functional areas in his "orientation plan", suggests an allocation of colour derived from the particular material or object to be worked on as little as this occurred in the statutes and working plans for the workshops. On the contrary, colour on the plan for orientation purposes in the building relied on showing the way with the aid of arrows. As a consequence, this eccentrically drawn plan – with its vertical wavy lines symbolizing staircases, and next to them the various section shown in perspective, as if threaded on to them – is particularly attractive aesthetically and to be understood largely as a typographical design. But its relevance as a plan intended to be implemented must remain disputed, as direct comparison with the actual colour schemes shows: on closer examination it is clear that the allocation of colours to the workshops in the orientation plan was also transferred to these plans, but here in order to identify the areas allocated to each of the workshops and not as design suggestions; the workshops were to be treated in white throughout.²⁵ It should be noted that this observation applies only to the workshop building and the first floor of the bridge. On the contrary, the colour identification for the floors of the Technische Lehranstalten is identical in its combination of two colours in each case (yellow-blue and yellow-red), at least on the two upper floors. This means that here these colours were intended to edge the bearers in the classrooms and also in the corridors. But the colour scheme for the ground floor of the Technische Lehranstalten differs from the corresponding colour allocation on the orientation plan, and so do the colours in the two main staircases. There are matches again in the re-

cognizable ceiling colouring of the stairs in the southern staircase of the workshop building and in the studio building. The ceiling colours in the corridors of the studio building develop from the ground floor to the second floor from blue via yellow to red, and then change to ochre and back again to yellow. This colour gradation corresponds with the colour of the bearers in the corridors of the technical training institutions, which contrasts with a varied colour sequence (red – blue – yellow) on the classroom bearers. This colouring of the bearers in the classrooms, which articulate the entirely white ceilings, appears to dominate the colour schemes for the particular floors, so that the plans could suggest that one could speak of a red, blue or yellow floor. But it is more likely that the classrooms were reached via the corridors and that the colour scheme of the corridor thus made a "sense of the floor" possible.

The characteristic identification of individual floors with a basic colour in each case and the associated use of "colour as a recognition sign" is also a characteristic of the murals painted by Herbert Bayer for the famous Bauhaus exhibition in 1923 in the side staircase of the Weimar Bauhaus. These are based on the design theory taught by Kandinsky, and they are "geometrical compositions arising from the Bauhaus's valid dogma of fixed relations between form and colour, or more precisely a precise match between the basic geometrical forms triangle, square and circle and the primary colours blue, red and yellow."²⁶ As well as this, Bayer arranged the individual colours here according to their brightness index of blue via red to yellow from bottom to top on the individual floors. But Scheper ignored this design approach, just as he did the principle of "applying free painting to the building."²⁷ In contrast with Bayer and also with the general Bauhaus approach to wall painting, Scheper's colour ideas clearly derived from the architecture. As early as 1922/23 he arrived at this form of wall design when painting the various rooms in the Weimar Museums, and it was then to reach its high point in the colour schemes for the Bauhaus and the university clinics in Münster.²⁸

Hinnerk Scheper, Attempt at coloured façade painting for the Dessau Bauhaus, 1926, perspective and elevations.

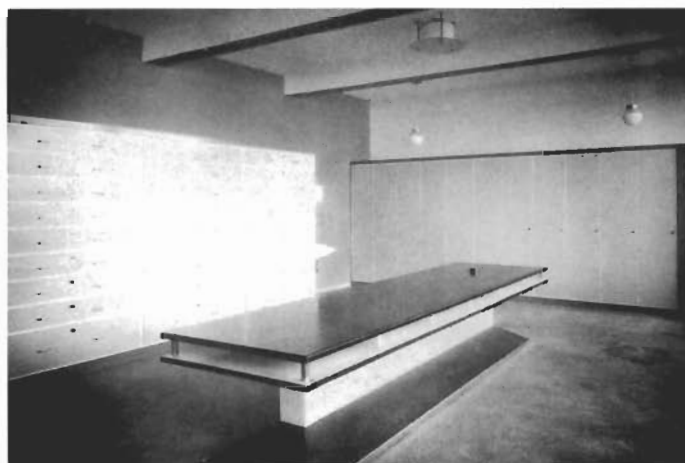


Refectory, 1926/27.

Staircase to the 1st floor of the Technische Lehranstalten, 1926/27.

Staff-room in the Technische Lehranstalten, 1926/27.

50



According to Scheper's plans, which were largely realized, the porch of the south entrance to the Technische Lehranstalten in the Bauhaus building led to an area in which the red of the ceiling dominated the colour mood. The door which one had passed before was painted red on the outside and black on the inside. In contrast with this, the inner roof of the entrance was intended to be white, just like the east and west walls, which again came up against light blue on the southern wall or piers that framed the front door. As a counterpart, this light blue is to be found on the opposite northern walls, flanking the access to the staircases on the ground floor. Scheper intended to continue this light blue over the staircase walls, in order finally to make this the dominant colour note on the front of the bearers in the corridors, harmonizing with the grey-bordered walls. The double door that separated the staircase from the ground floor corridors, was painted in a very black shade of anthracite, like the insides of the entrance doors. It is interesting that Scheper tried to extend the relatively small-scale porch in the Technische Lehranstalten sideways by painting the walls white, and relativized the main ceiling area, which seemed low because of the red paint by using a white rectangular panel in the centre of the ceiling, which also housed the rectangular, box-shaped lamps. In this way, and also by keeping the small ceiling area above the staircase white – or light beige according to colour tests – he effectively opened up the space and took people entering into the school corridor area via the stairs. Here, as on all the other school floors, which had corridors with rooms on both sides, lit by glazed skylights above the naturally-coloured wooden drawing-board cupboards, the defining long walls were kept grey without exception. They led west via a concluding wall which, in the form of a pier reveal and bearer, appeared in brilliant white, along the drawing-board cupboards to the almost completely glazed front western wall, which at the same time gave access to the western classrooms via a glass door. Here the route led against the light in the opposite direction to the eastern front walls of the floor, which were all painted a very bright, light blue, and this intended



to conclude the space in a relatively consistent fashion. This was thus an orientation system that was reticent but clearly recognizable, directing visitors in the staircase areas of the Technische Lehranstalten almost imperceptibly towards the classrooms – much more than towards the bridge-like section, which was occupied predominantly by the actual Bauhaus. Both the main entrance and the entrance to the Technische Lehranstalten led to the connecting passage on the first floor of the bridge. Here Schepers' colour scheme, in contrast with the ceilings in the corridors and classrooms of the Technische Lehranstalten, did not use colour to distinguish between bearing and filling areas. Just as in the workshop building, the ceiling in the bridge connecting corridor was intended to be in uniform white or beige, not taking into account the bearers running transversely to the line of the corridor. The corridor acquired a horizontal accent from the red paint intended for all the window bearers, thus also conveying movement within the corridor. A certain colour dynamic was also produced by the eastern, light-blue front wall, which was to find a counterpart opposite, in the foyer of the main staircase. Thus the corridor access was restricted

visually, but this effect was cancelled in the window areas, producing a spatial dynamism that also contained a certain quality of movement.

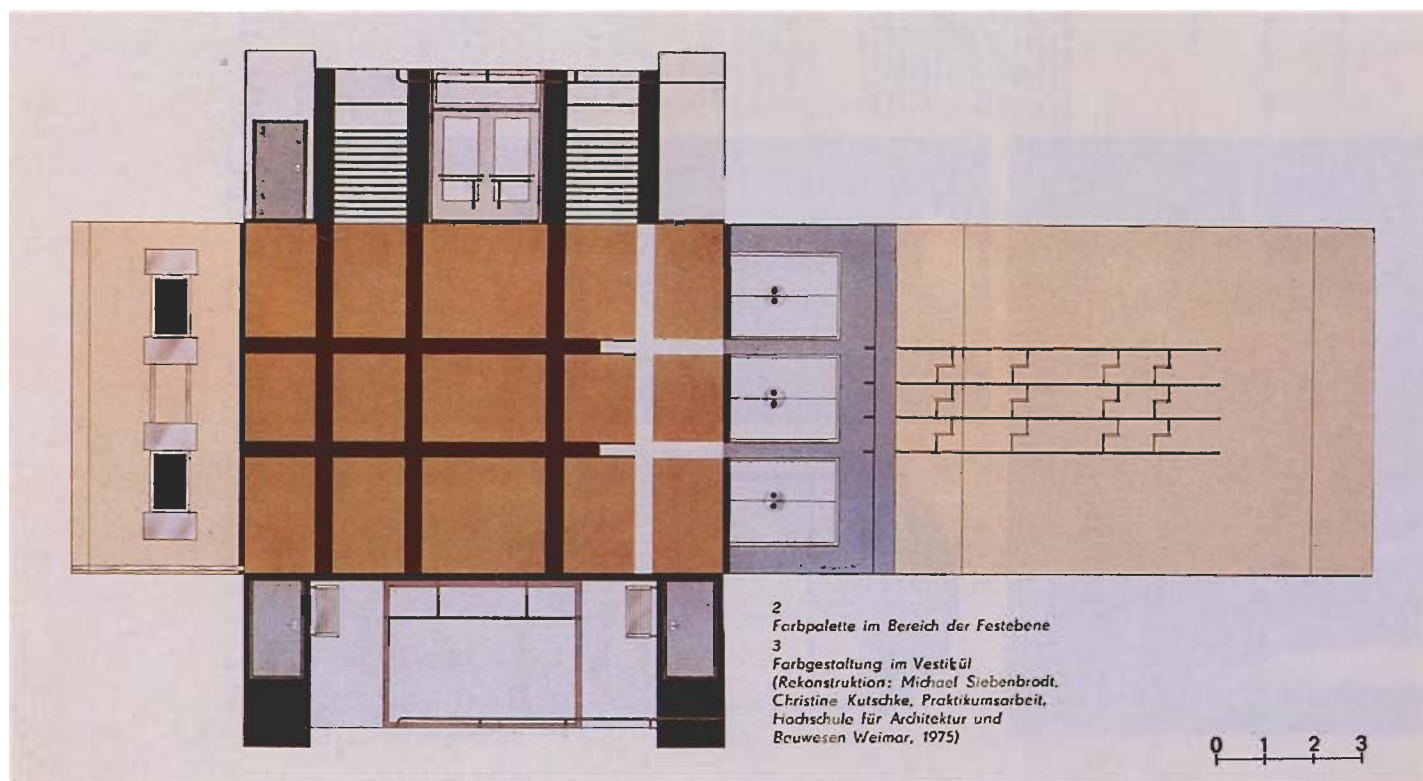
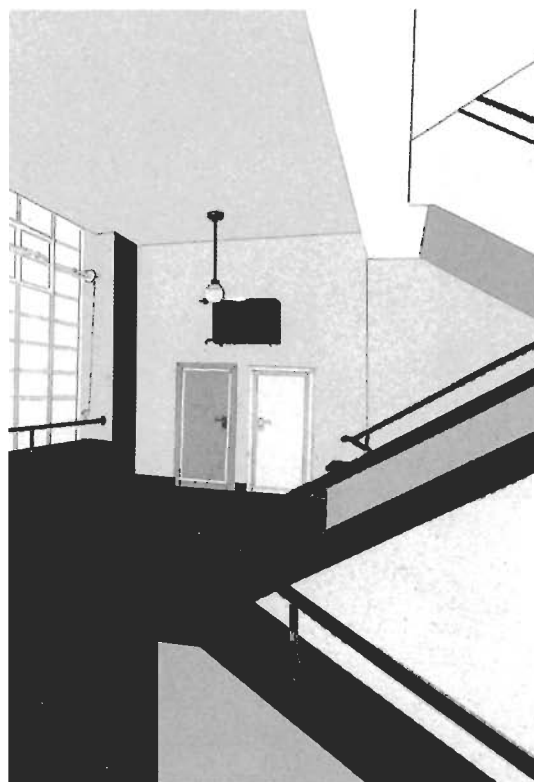
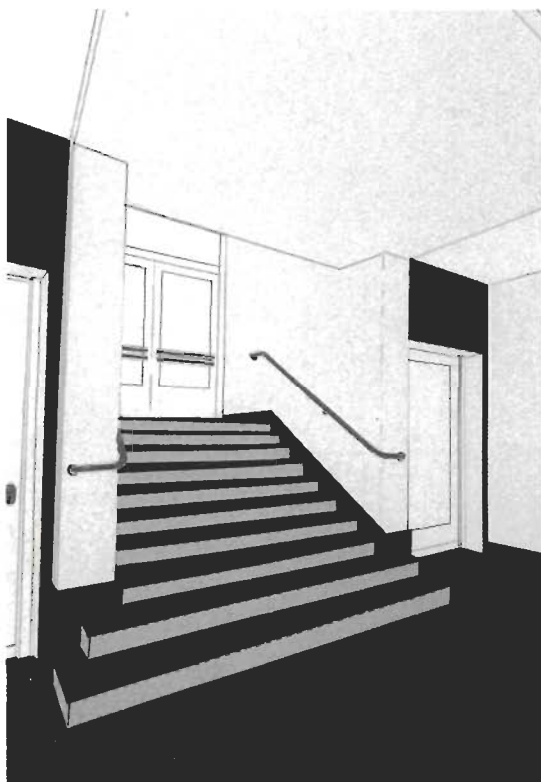
It is not possible to see from Schepers' plan how the eastern corridor wall was to be designed in relation to the band of windows. In the same way all the entrances to rooms were left out of account in the colour scheme. One exception is the entrance to the "director's study". Here the door is noted down as black, but without saying whether this refers to the inside or the outside. There are no detailed colour test reports for the corridors on the first floor of the bridge, and it is unlikely that there will be any in the future, given the amount of redesigning work that has been done here in the past. However, partial control apertures on the inside of the bridge windows and photographic records suggest a light grey or beige colouring, which again corresponds with Schepers' plans for the exterior, where he suggested a combination of light grey and some white for the bridge windows. Tests on the surviving original doors produced light-grey doors combined with dark-grey door-frames for absolutely all the doors on the bridge, including the entrance to the director's

Reconstruction according to colour research by Denkmal-
pflege Berlin GmbH in 1994; areas not filled in could not
be related to the original colour scheme.
Main entrance, view to the south-west, 1st version.

Staircase in the workshop wing from the ground floor to the 1st floor /
view to the east, 2nd version.

Michael Siebenbrodt, Christine Kutschke, Range of colours in the celebration area
and reconstruction of the colour scheme in the Bauhaus vestibule, 1975.

52



Staircase in the workshop wing from the ground floor to the first floor /
view to the south-west, 1st version.

Staircase in the Technische Lehranstalten from the 1st to the 2nd floor /
view to the north-east, 1st version.

Staircase in the workshop wing from the 1st to the 2nd floor /
view to the south-west, 1st version.





Main staircase in the workshop wing, entrance vestibule with the three doors to the hall, 1997.
Dining room, view of the serving-hatch, reconstructed tubular steel stools and wooden tables by Marcel Breuer, 1997.



Corridor on the ground floor of the Technische Lehranstalten, 1997.

Staircase in the Technische Lehranstalten from the ground floor to the 1st floor, 1995.



Corridor and staircase on the 1st floor of the Technische Lehranstalten, 1995.
Former "conference room" near the director's office, 1993.



office. If one considers all the available information, then we have an image of the corridor colours in which darker, clear colours are combined with lighter shades. The linoleum floor was kept fairly dark, in green, and above this were light walls into which the doors were fitted with a mediating light grey. There is no doubt that the dark-grey door-frames, running into the skirting boards in the same colour, formed a contrast with the light walls. These components also formed the projection areas for the lively shadow-play caused by the window bars on sunny afternoons. The black terrazzo window-seats provided another highlight, along with the window lintels in their contrasting red, with the lightly coloured metal window-frames between them.

The interiors on the first floor of the bridge were relatively lively in Scheper's colour scheme, in contrast with the other rooms, especially in the treatment of the ceiling fields. Here the principle of a colour contrast for the bearers against the white or light-beige ceiling colour that can be observed in the Technische Lehranstalten is reversed here: coloured ceilings are framed by white bearers, which again meet at right angles the white bearers of the eastern window wall and the grey-framed built-in cupboards, which were apparently intended to be placed in front of the western concluding wall in each of these rooms. These built-in cupboards have survived in several of the rooms on the first floor of the bridge. Evidence is still needed that they were also realized in other places where Scheper had intended them to be. Paint tests on the existing built-in cupboards make it clear that the light grey of the room doors was repeated on the cupboard doors, and so was the dark grey of the door-frames on the frame structure of the cupboards. It was also possible to reconstruct the ceiling colours in the same way, resulting in an overall match with Scheper's plan. The colours red, blue and yellow were distributed in precisely this order, starting symmetrically at the director's study. Consequently the ceilings of the immediately adjacent rooms were painted in a shade of red, the next ones blue, and then the ones next to these yellow. Thus the intensity of the ceil-

ing colour increased as the rooms got smaller towards the director's office, and a colour dynamic also derived from this and directed at the director's office also developed over and above a certain dynamic in the ground plans. This office in its turn did not seem to be the climax of the colour structure, but more like a room whose yellow-beige coloured ceilings were able to balance the tension that built up in the flanking rooms. But as this impression, as well as the definite dominance of light blue as a colour along with white throughout this floor of the Bauhaus building, arises only when looking at the existing colour scheme, and less in real experience of the spaces, undue weight should not be given to this observation.

This may also apply to the choice of colour for the ceilings in the individual rooms, which does not really provide a direct causal link to the functional context or working process in the individual rooms. The colour distribution can be explained much more readily by Scheper's principle for interior colour design, which included architectural, ordering and direction-finding aspects just as much as natural handling of light and the therapeutic effects of colour. Scheper was able as early as 1924, when he designed the university clinics in Münster, to implement a colour scheme that took account of the psychological and space-shaping effects of colour. The planning for the Bauhaus as an educational institution seems more lively and full of contrast, without departing from the principle of a careful design based largely on pastel colours. But here more than elsewhere primary colours are the starting-point for achieving colour-balance largely by using white.

The director's office was also no exception to this, although this is not the impression given at first glance. The director's office is worked out in comparatively close detail in Scheper's colour scheme for the first floor, to the extent that black is noted as the inside colour for the door on the corridor side, white for the western wall above the built-in cupboards and black for the north wall of the room, alongside the usual ceiling identification. This colour allocation matches the detailed colour scheme that Hinnerk Scheper devised for

this room and is the only plan for an individual room in the Bauhaus that has survived.²⁹ This plan is hitherto unpublished and scarcely known, and it shows Scheper's intended colour scheme for the built-in cupboards, the other room entrances and above all for the hitherto unknown design for the south wall opposite the director's study. Thus he used graded shades of grey for the dark-grey frames of the wall cupboards, with the degree of lightening increasing in three stages from outside to inside, to form an intersecting edge with the black door in a very light grey tending to white. With this contrast of light and dark Scheper achieved an effect of depth based on the simultaneous contrast by which dark colours recede in a light context. It is not least in consideration of this fact that a three-dimensional quality is produced at this point in the cupboard wall that is already prestructured architecturally, especially by the gradations in the door reveals, and gives this entrance to the room something of the character of a portal. The very light grey of the built-in cupboards is also to be found on the frames of the doors leading to the conference room and the former secretaries' office.

When compared with the restorers' paint tests on the first colour scheme in the room with Scheper's intentions, this is the point at which the most serious differences can be found: it was not the door-frames, but the door reveals that were painted a very light grey, which widened the opening visually, contrasting with a grey door and a dark-grey frame. The dark grey of the surrounding door-frame, a colour that runs through the whole room as a band round the frame of the cupboards and the skirting-board, marks both parts of the structure of the various functional elements and non-bearing and filling elements in the constructional sphere. This grey also mediated between the colour of the floor, the doors, the built-in cupboards and the colour of the walls. An additional feature is that grey in all its shades and in matt-silk gloss brings out the warm yellow metal glow of the nickel-plated cupboard and door fittings like scarcely any other colour. This colour is also assigned a function at this point as a reticent

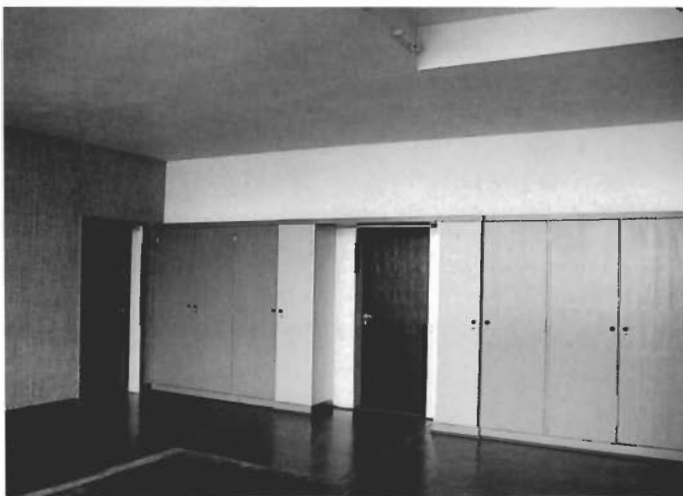


reflecting area for the light coming in through the windows opposite, as in the other rooms on the bridge.

In contrast with this, the south wall of the director's suite was designed in a much more spectacular fashion. Here Scheper had intended to use a natural bast covering here. Detailed tests on the walls revealed remnants of this, and also indications of how it was hung, which suggests that this particular aspect of the colour scheme, like almost all the other colour choices put forward by Scheper, actually was implemented, with the exception of a few details. There is no doubt that this wall, which was constantly before Gropius's eyes when he looked up from his desk, provided a comfortable quality and a warmth, already present in the material and its brownish-yellow colour, which may be surprising at first. Although the use of textile or other natural-fibre wall coverings was entirely normal, especially in domestic contexts,³⁰ it was nowhere near as common in workshops or offices. A large-scale use of textile wall-coverings, thus determining the nature of the space, seems to

Director's office, colour window at window reveal and frame for testing the colour scheme in the main access area (restoration: Peter Schöne, Halle), 1996.
 Director's office, window profile after restoration, 1996.
 Main entrance area and part of the bast-covered south wall, 1996.

60

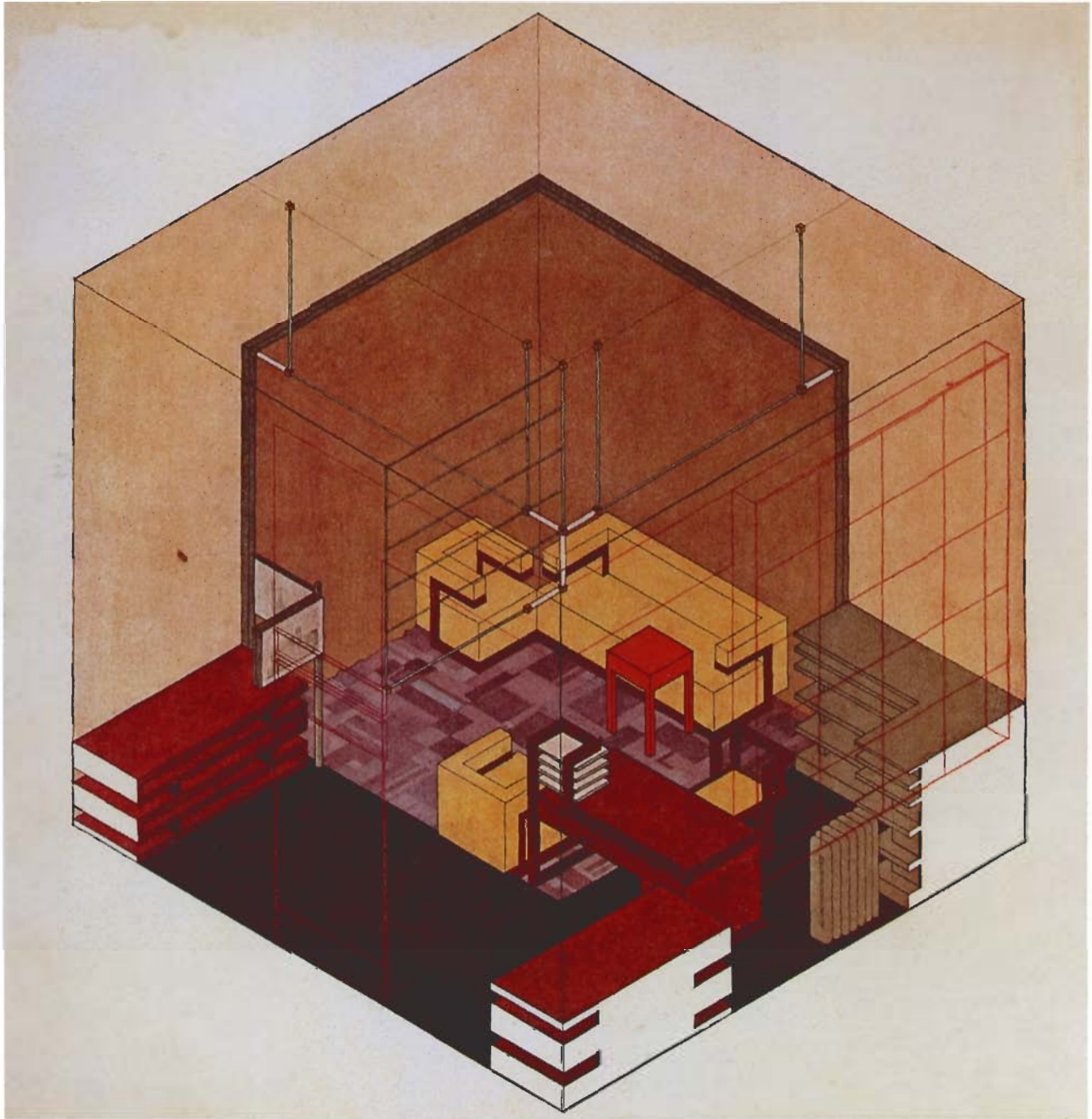


have played a part in the Weimar Bauhaus director's study as well: Herbert Bayer's coloured axonometric drawing reveals a curtain in the corner of the room, in contrasting brown and framed with strips of wood, which covered the actual entrance to the room, and which became a wall covering on the adjacent wall. In front of this were the sofa that Gropius had developed and one of the two armchairs that belonged to it, with lemon-coloured covers, and also a stool-like coffee table.³¹ The design of the south wall of the director's office in Dessau using a bast covering and the unexplained whereabouts of part of the Weimar furniture lead us to assume that there was a reception area in front of this wall that could have corresponded with the furnishings of the room in Weimar in some particulars. This thesis cannot be proven at the time of writing, but it should at least be broached here; it remains to be seen whether a counter-argument can be put forward. In any case, there is no indication of how the space opposite Gropius's working area was furnished. There is, however, photographic evidence of the working area itself. This shows that Gropius used at least some of the furniture from his director's office in Weimar, including one of the two armchairs and the desk, in the Dessau study, whose walls, ceilings and floors seemed to fit in with the furniture in terms of colour. For example, the lemon-yellow colour of the armchair corresponded with the light-yellow ceiling, the reddish wooden tones of the desk and the grey of the built-in filing cabinets.

Red would have set another very important colour accent, working like a signal. This colour was presumably used for the wall of the glazed showcase that extended from ceiling to floor. It bordered the working area in the direction of the adjacent room entrance and defined a relatively independent room within a room with the recessed niche in the ceiling area and the grouping of the working furniture.³² As two of the main colours, red and yellow, are known for certain, the question of the colour blue arises. It is possible that it occurred in a mixture with grey in the carpeting that separated the working area from the rest of the room, whose floor was covered in dark-brown linoleum.

Walter Gropius, director's office in the Weimar Bauhaus, b/w photograph by Lucia Moholy, coloured, 1924.







The floor covering had the same dimensions as the yellow section of the ceiling and the anthracite-grey north wall that also appeared as a large rectangle behind the desk. This too seems very weighty in its dark colouring above the lighter built-in cupboards, and appears to have been folded down from the ceiling.

In Scheper's plan the wall area that abuts the light yellow of the ceiling, standing for mental activity, is in an anthracite tending to black, but this was not intended to be a homogenous surface. It was clear that what Scheper was planning in this prominent place was a colour application with certain "effects", but so long nothing found during the restoration work has been able to prove this. Even without this effect structure the polychrome aspect of the director's suite was essentially reticent, arising ultimately from the colour of the furnishings, as in all the other rooms in the Bauhaus. A distinguished reticence is expressed in the shades of grey, which were devel-

oped from white pigmented with black, and also in the beige of the ceiling and the wall-areas in broken white. The room's character derives from this, in combination with a festive mood conveyed by the colours red (front wall of the glazed showcase), black (south wall behind the working area), yellow (armchair and ceiling above the working area) and brown (floor and in the bast covering of the south wall, there lightened to a brownish yellow).

The room also has constructive and structural qualities that distinguish it from other rooms in the Bauhaus building. The recessed ceiling and the brown floor make it seem cramped, entirely as an element of the architecture. A horizontal tendency can be discerned, further emphasized by the transverse rectangular structure of the wall surfaces and broken only by the red, also rectangular surface of the glass showcase and the vertical accents on the doors. The fact that the room still seems well-proportioned arises from the ratio of its height to the square ground plan and

the sophisticated colour design. The squaring of the space that can still be discerned in the director's office in Weimar seems to show only in the ground plan in Dessau, and as a relic in the cubic armchair. "Now everything fits together, the architecture is by Gropius and the room is part of this architecture ... Now the image of reality takes over the function of the idea that is frozen in the image of the director's office in Weimar. Now we have caught up with time, and thus with ... hope for a new time."³³

- 1 Nelly Schwalacher, Das neue Bauhaus, in: *Abendblatt der Frankfurter Zeitung*, 31.10.1927.
- 2 Rudolf Arnheim, quoted from Magdalena Droste, *Bauhaus 1919-1933*, Cologne 1991, p. 122.
- 3 The names for the individual sections of the building were coined by Walter Gropius in his book *Bauhausbauten Dessau* (1930).
- 4 Cf. documentation of the colour tests on window elements in the Bauhaus building by A. Günther, Dessau, October 1994, Stiftung Bauhaus Dessau, Sammlung, and contemporary photographs, in publications including: Hans M. Wingler, *The Bauhaus*. Weimar, Dessau, Berlin, Chicago. Cambridge/Mass., 7th printing, 1986; Walter Gropius, *bauhausbauten dessau* (1930), reprint Mainz, Berlin 1974, illustrations pp. 53, 60, 61, 68, 80, and in: Erich Consemüller, *Fotografien Bauhaus Dessau*, Munich 1989, cat. nos. 25, 27, 29, 31, 32.
- 5 Paul Westheim on the Dessau Bauhaus building, in: *Berliner Börsen-Zeitung*, 15.12.1926.
- 6 Giulio Carlo Argan, *Gropius und das Bauhaus*, Hamburg 1962, (Turin 1951), p. 73.
- 7 In his housing estates in particular Gropius liked to form bands of windows by painting the walls between the window apertures black, to emphasize the horizontal quality of his buildings in the exterior.
- 8 For Walter Gropius's working methods and his contradictory view of Teamwork cf. in particular: Annemarie Jaeggi, *Die plastische Kraft des Wortes: Entwerfen im Gespräch. Zur Arbeitsmethode von Walter Gropius*, in: *archithese*, issue 4, 1995, pp. 8-13.
- 9 op. cit. note 8, p. 12.
- 10 Letter from Walter Gropius to Richard Döcker dated 22.10.1965, quoted from Annemarie Jaeggi, op. cit. note 8.
- 11 For the life and work of Hinnerk Scheper cf.: Renate Scheper, *Farbe im Stadtbild – Farbgestaltungen im alten Dessau von Hinnerk Scheper und der Wandmalerei am Bauhaus*, *Dessauer Kalender* 1991, pp. 21-30, and op. cit., part 2, in: *Dessauer Kalender* 1992, pp. 24-30.
- 12 Scheper had for example already been involved in painting the Sommerfeld and Otte houses in Berlin in 1921/22.
- 13 Cf. Christian Wolsdorff, *Die Werkstatt für Wandmalerei*, in: *Experiment Bauhaus*, Berlin 1988, p. 285.
- 14 Including the Palais Reina (destroyed), various small buildings in the former "Großer Palaisgarten" (destroyed), the Palais Hilda (destroyed), the porch of the Altes Theater (destroyed).
- 15 Hinnerk und Lou Scheper, *Architektura i zret* (Architecture and colour) in: *Maljarnee delo*, Moscow 1930, nos. 1-2, pp. 12-15, quoted from Renate Scheper, *Wandmalerei und Tapete*, in: *Bauhaustapete. Reklame & Erfolg einer Marke*. Published by Tapetenfabrik Gebr. Rasch GmbH & Co./Stiftung Bauhaus Dessau, Cologne 1995, p. 90.
- 16 Hinnerk Scheper, *Wie die Bauhaus-Tapete entstand*, in: *Werk und Zeit, Sonderbeilage Werkbericht*, vol. 4, no. 2, p. 55.
- 17 The plans are part of Hinnerk Scheper's estate, which is in private hands; most of it is kept in the Bauhaus-Archiv, Berlin. With the exception of the colour scheme for the directorate, all the plans have already appeared in

- publications including: Experiment Bauhaus. Exhibition catalogue, Bauhaus-Archiv, Berlin 1988, pp. 294-297, two plans (exterior views: south-east view, west view with north view of the Technische Lehranstalten, south view of the Technische Lehranstalten, west view of the studio building, three colour plans of the ground, first and second floors and a coloured organization plan). Other plans in: Wulf Herzogenrath (ed.) with Stefan Kraus, Bauhaus Utopien. Arbeiten auf Papier, Cologne 1988, p. 179, one plan (exterior view: east view, north view and west view of the studio building).
- 18 Cf. collection catalogue, Bauhaus-Archiv, Berlin 1981, p. 191, explanation of cat. no. 365.
 - 19 This view was arrived at by comparing the reproduction of the "Organization plan" in the magazine "Offset. Buch und Werbekunst", 1926, issue 7, ill. before p. 365, and the reproduction (draft) variant from the Scheper estate in the Bauhaus-Archiv, Berlin collection catalogue, 1981, p. 192, cat. no. 364, there called "Farbiger Orientierungsplan des Bauhauses in Dessau".
 - 20 Wulf Herzogenrath (ed.) with Stefan Kraus, Bauhaus Utopien, op. cit. note 17, p. 179.
 - 21 Typewritten text stuck on to Hinnerk Scheper's "Orientation plan", also printed as a text, in: Offset. Buch der Werbekunst. 1926, issue 7, p. 365.
 - 22 Ute Brüning first pointed out this aspect, in: Ute Brüning, Bauhaus-Archiv (ed.), Das A und O des Bauhauses. Bauhauswerbung: Schriftbilder, Drucksachen, Ausstellungsdesign. Exhibition catalogue, Berlin 1995, p. 87 and p. 295, explanation of cat. no. 87.
 - 23 op. cit. note 22.
 - 24 op. cit. note 22, p. 87.
 - 25 Walter Gropius, op. cit. note 4, p. 68.
 - 26 Rainer Wick, Bauhausarchitektur und Farbe, in: Wiss. Zeitschrift der HAB Weimar, vol. 29 1983, issue 516, p. 483.
 - 27 op. cit. note 26.
 - 28 The colour plans for the university clinic in Münster/ Westfalen dating from are in the Scheper estate, Berlin.
 - 29 The colour scheme for the "Bauhaus Dessau. Direktorium" is, like the colour schemes for the individual floors of the Bauhaus building, in tempera and also in collage form. The drawing is executed in such a way that the space is seen from below, with the four walls appearing to be folded open to the ceiling. The plan is in the Scheper estate, Berlin.
 - 30 Ingrid Radewaldt identified Gunta Stölzl, a Bauhaus master, as the originator of the wall covering in the director's office. There were fabric wall coverings in the student accommodation at the studio building as well.
 - 31 Bayer's drawing is illustrated in: Staatliches Bauhaus Weimar, 1919-1923, Weimar/ Munich 1923, p. 178, cf.: Ulrike Jehle-Schulte Strathaus, Gropius' Direktionszimmer – Bilderstrategie eines Interieurs, in: B. Wyss (ed.), Bildfälle. Die Moderne im Zwielicht, Zurich, Munich 1990, pp. 82-87.
 - 32 Although the showcase no longer exists, traces of red paint were discovered in repeated colour tests at the point on the ceiling where the front wall of the showcase was originally fixed.
 - 33 Ulrike Jehle-Schulte Strathaus, op. cit. note 31, p. 87.

Margret Kentgens-Craig
Art and politics: no “new unity”



A significant period of 20th century Modernism came to an end when the Bauhaus closed in Berlin in 1933. But in terms of cultural history this did not conclude the "Bauhaus" chapter: only a little later the institution's international influence rose to heights that have seldom been surpassed; its influence still persists at this level, and the phenomenon requires analysis. Ludwig Mies van der Rohe explained the Bauhaus's ability to survive by suggesting that it had not been an educational institution first and foremost, but an idea, and it was only for this reason that it had had the power "to spread so widely".¹ In fact there is a large conglomerate of changing ideas behind the name "Bauhaus". These live on in the people who went through the Bauhaus, in institutions that were founded subsequently, in the generations of students who were taught there, and in the original evidence that has come down to us from the period between 1919 and 1933 in Weimar, Dessau and Berlin.

There is no doubt that the most significant item of this evidence is the Bauhaus building in Dessau. It was designed in 1925 by Walter Gropius with Carl Fieger and others, and what was then called the Hochschule für Gestaltung Bauhaus Dessau moved into it officially on 4 December 1926. Hans Maria Wingler, the author of the fullest record of the Bauhaus, said that the opening day was "probably the brightest in the history (of the school)",² celebrated by over a thousand guests from Germany and abroad. The communal work of Gropius's architect's office and the Bauhaus workshops was celebrated as embodying the creative, educational and social aims of the Dessau programme. This aimed to use fundamental craft and design training to prepare young people for the modern, industrially-determined labour market, by bringing art and technology together as a "new unity"³ to meet the design challenges of the period and to create a new kind of human being by reconciling art and life.

The building was canonized almost immediately and went on to become an icon of Modern architecture. It certainly was the supreme embodiment of the Bauhaus idea, but it also epitomized

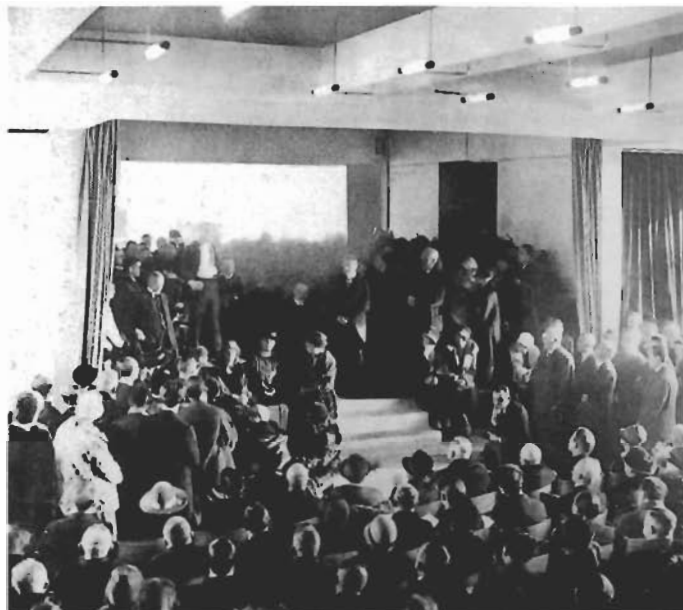
the dramatically restricted image that the Bauhaus sometimes conjured up for the rest of the world. In extreme cases this led to the Bauhaus's architect, its architecture and its architecture school being perceived as one and the same thing.⁴ The Dessau school was also drawn into this one-dimensional picture: here a relatively short period of about six years saw the terms of office of all three directors of the Bauhaus, Walter Gropius, Hannes Meyer and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, and their different views of curricula, teaching methods and aims. Here the postulate of the "new unity" of art and technology became the fundamental basis for material and technical research work and creative experiment, and it was here that the majority of the industrially oriented products with which the Bauhaus is so very much identified today came into being.

The levels of information, publicity and memory conveyed through the physical existence of the Bauhaus building cannot be overestimated. This was recognized by all those who were entrusted with ownership or administration of the building after 1933: principally the political organs of city, region and state. The architectural significance of the Bauhaus building as a milestone in the development of the International Style in architecture, and its identity as the school's built programme, made it difficult to ignore; it also meant that the building had to suffer repeatedly as a substitute target for aggression on the one hand and monopolization on the other, primarily aimed at the Bauhaus's ideas and protagonists. The way in which both opponents and admirers treated the building, significantly most often based on its "outer shell", also revealed their attitude to the history of the Bauhaus as an institution.

In all social systems, the way in which a famous and controversial work of architecture, fine art, music or literature is treated officially says something about the cultural esteem or threatening potential that accorded to it. This is most clearly visible in totalitarian societies. The Dessau Bauhaus is almost a paradigm here. Its biography reflects the way in which it depended on the values and views of the political power at the

Guests outside the main entrance, presumably taken on 4 December 1926,
the opening day.
Celebration in the hall on 4 December 1926.

68

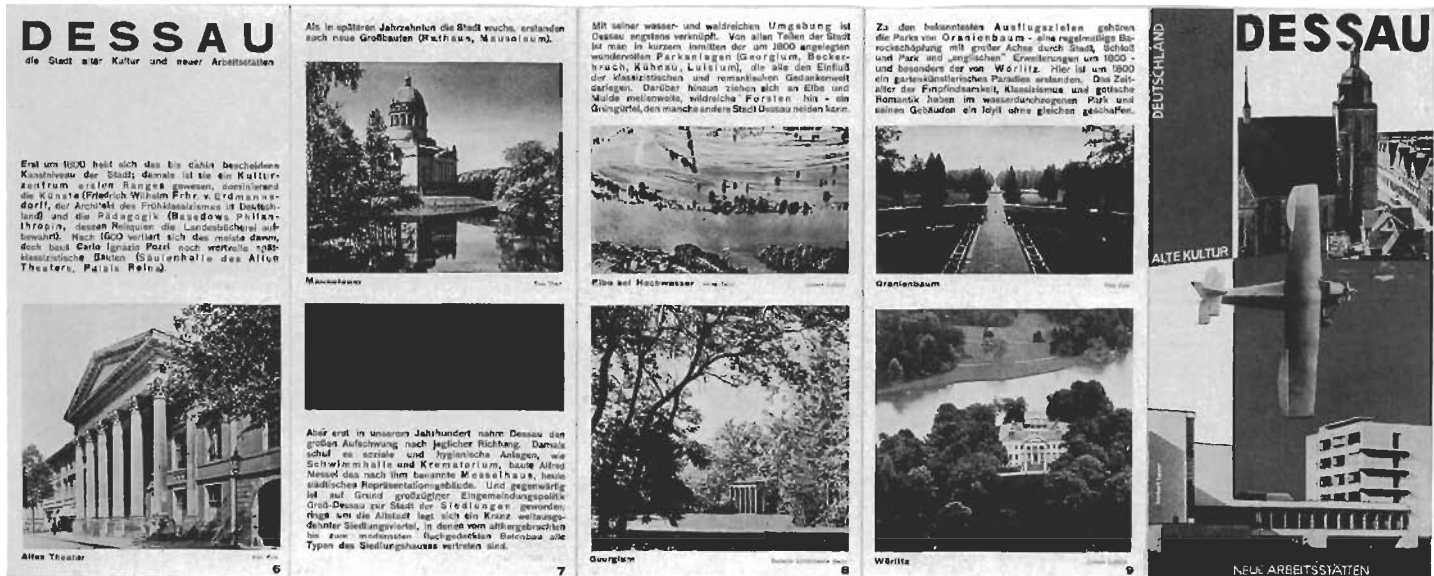


time. Thus continuity and breaks in handling the Bauhaus legacy can be read from the condition of the building and the uses to which it has been put. In the periods between the great upheavals that divide German history from 1919 to 1989 into five major chapters – the Weimar Republic, the Third Reich, liberation and early occupation, the two Germanies and reunification – the life-story of the Bauhaus follows an almost parallel course.

As a rule the life-story of buildings depends on the interplay of a series of factors, like quality of design, planning and execution, materials and construction, use and maintenance, external conditions and effects, and in the worst case wars and disasters. But one crucial factor is always the way in which the building is treated by those who determine its fate. Usually a building gives away how carefully or neglectfully it has been treated in the past, even after a very long time. This is all the more true of Modern buildings of the 1920s like the Dessau Bauhaus, which were intended more for timelessness and impeccable maintenance than graceful ageing. Since the closure of the "Hochschule für Gestaltung Bauhaus Dessau" the building has been subjected to numerous changes of use and architectural modifications, often arbitrarily and without any sense of monument preservation. On many occasions ideologically driven forces threatened to pull the building down because the history of the Bauhaus's art, architecture and personalities was a thorn in their flesh. However, the worst material damage was ultimately inflicted by the bombs that hit the building just before the end of the war, though this was presumably unintentional: the Bauhaus was on the Allies' list of buildings to be avoided in air-raids.⁵

The Weimar Republic: integrating the values of the new Democracy

It is no coincidence that the life of the Bauhaus as an institution almost corresponds with that of the Weimar Republic. The life of the school reflected the upheavals in the state and social structure after the First World War, and also the political and economic upsets of the subsequent years, and the break with democracy. For the Bauhaus, one of the

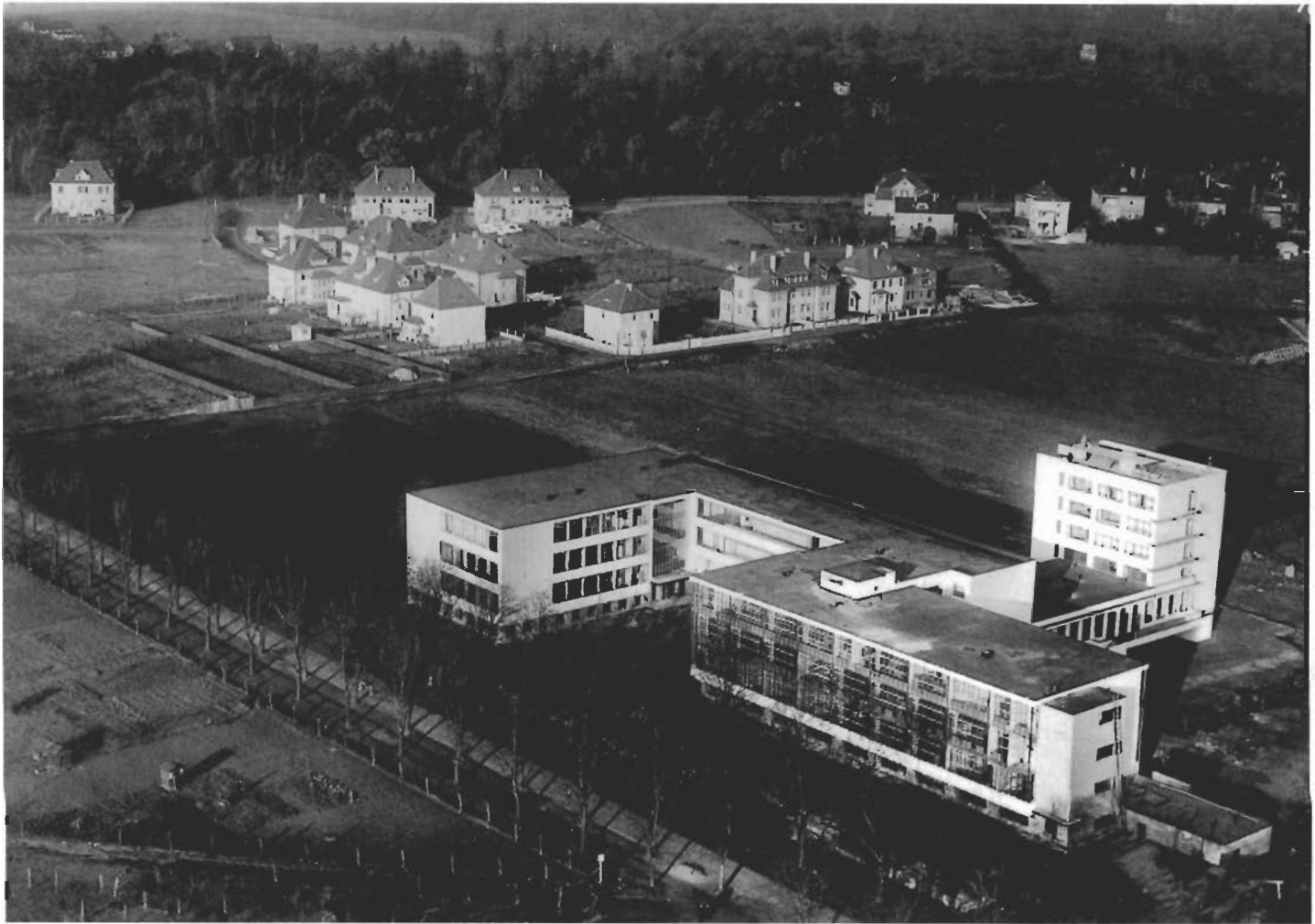


first effects was increasing hostility and difficulty in Weimar and finally the move to Dessau.

By 1925, when the Bauhaus moved there, the town of Dessau had developed from a 19th century, neoclassical residence town into an up-and-coming industrial centre. Dessau anticipated that the Bauhaus's research into materials and techniques, and its design experiments, would be useful in terms of industrial product development for industries in the town that were relevant to the future, especially the Junkers factory; it also felt that projects could be tackled in partnership. For this reason the town invited the Bauhaus to move in and, among other things, put a considerable site at Walter Gropius's disposal for a new building. His design chimed completely with the spirit of the place and of the age in its outward appearance: its aesthetic addressed technology and machines, and its formal vocabulary pointed the way forward for the avant-garde architecture that Henry-Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson would describe a few years later under the heading "International Style". The realization of this building gave the Bauhaus community the privilege of working in surroundings whose design reflected the Bauhaus founder's teaching programme and architectural concepts, and which were also tailored functionally to the school's specific working programme, forms and needs. Gropius saw architecture as a way of shaping vital functions, and the



complex, with its five functional units – workshop wing, vocational school wing, connecting bridge with rooms for offices and architecture studios, link building with social facilities and separate accommodation made it possible to combine living and working efficiently. But with this building the architect was also creating experimental conditions that went beyond previously customary educational realities, by permitting a new form of communal existence for pupils and teachers. Until then no German institute of higher education had



built integral student accommodation. At the Bauhaus the "Prellerhaus", named in memory of the studio building in Weimar, made a contribution to communal life and a feeling of belonging together, and the same was true of the sports fields in the south-eastern part of the site.⁶ The other side of this coin was that the Bauhaus could allow itself to form a relatively closed microcosm within the Dessau community.

The building was cut off from the town centre by railway lines and the station, and the infrastructure in its immediate vicinity was underdeveloped; thus it was very soon in danger of being completely isolated. This was countered above all by arranging festivities and other cultural events in the building, so that the Bauhaus and the community could interact. Even the layout of the building seemed to express this desire for integration: it literally stretched its limbs outwards on

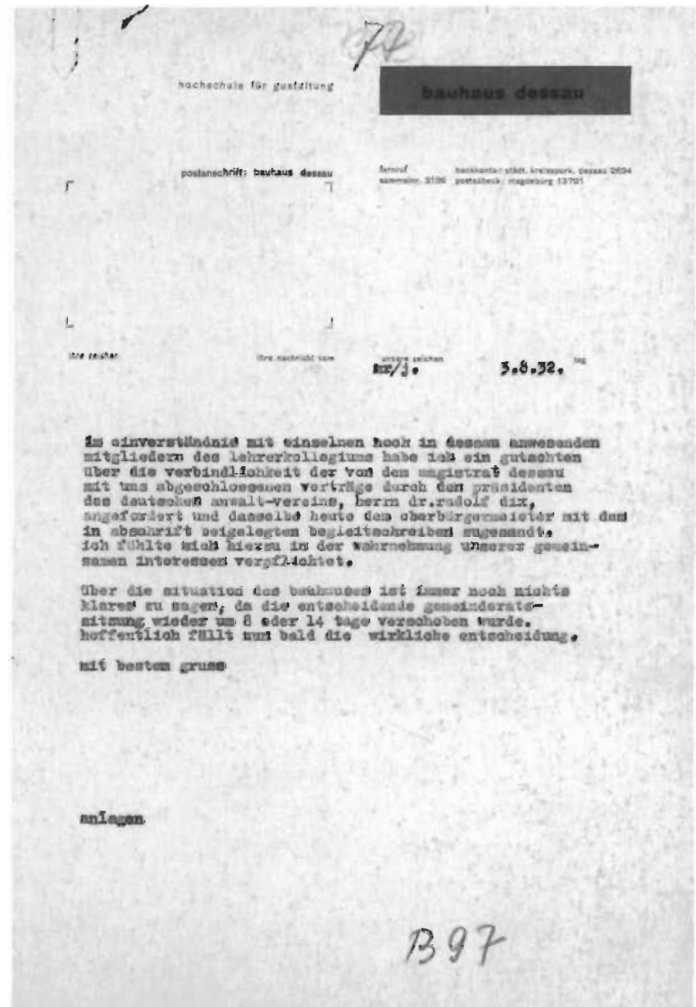
the sides, even right across a road, and thus both enclosed and created areas of public space. The curtain wall façade of the workshop wing, and the large areas of glass in the other façades, gave the Bauhaus a degree of transparency that was unknown for public buildings at the time, opening it up to be looked into from the outside, and allowing those inside to look out. It removed the boundary between the public and the private – or as here the semi-private nature of a small school – a boundary that was strictly maintained in German institutional buildings at that time. The challenge to visual communication that this offers to passers-by suggests that this really is a "public" building, a building in which it is impossible to hide behind the scenes, and equally impossible to avoid addressing the realities of life outside. The Bauhaus's asymmetrical layout also rejects the monumental and massive institutional style of the past by breaking

up the mass of the building; the white rendered façades and the light, soaring quality of the various sections of the building make a further contribution. The building is not structured hierarchically; several sections, each claiming an identity for itself, join to make up the complex. Peter Gay, the US-American cultural historian, relates Walter Gropius's twenties and thirties architecture directly to the Weimar Republic, and interprets it as an expression of democratic thinking.⁷ Gropius's housing estates confirm the link between Neues Bauen and the social and political interests of the Weimar Republic in a different way, but they do it more obviously than the Bauhaus building because of their intended use. Gropius himself referred explicitly to changes in the social and political system of his day that he felt to be desirable, and to which he hoped to give some impetus:

"The financial rule of the industrial state follows the tyranny of the state at war. The owning classes dominate both state forms, and the masses get poorer. The possibility emerges of setting up a culturally worthy life for everyone by dominating nature. Egotistical individualism is replaced by social individualism. The state's aim becomes the perfection of the individual, and the structure of society is a means to this end."⁸

Formal and functional elements in the architecture of the Bauhaus express its democratic approach, and achievements of Modernism like the rule of law, democracy, human rights and individual freedom certainly had a direct effect on the life at the Bauhaus as a public institution. However, we must not forget that the architect was not trying to implement a particular political or philosophical approach with this design. He was trying to unite his artistic formal will with industrial aesthetics, and to meet the institution's pragmatic and functional needs. Equally, the school's programme was not seen as political positioning in the more limited sense. Nevertheless, a great deal that happened in the Bauhaus was political action (in the sense of Ulrich Beck's new definition of Modernism).⁹ This would include a break with traditional educational forms in order to educate young people in an up-to-date fashion, strong integration

of foreign and Jewish students and teachers, taking about thirty per cent of women students, acknowledging modern demands made by industry and technology, and recognizing social concerns. In the Bauhaus's political struggles and defeats, and in the powerlessness of its three directors to avert them, we see reflected the fragile structure of the first democratic system in Germany. Correspondence in 1932 by the last director, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, with the responsible authorities about the closure of the Dessau Bauhaus,¹⁰ demonstrates a dwindling commitment to the rule of law, and the impotence of objective argument. The arbitrariness with which opponents presented their political strategies, values or simply dim feelings as "truths", and got them accepted, made artists, and other creative people affected, sense at an early stage the kind of fundamental change that the Third Reich was intending to put through.



National Socialism: aggression and destruction

The Bauhaus manifesto adopted in 1919 left no doubt about the founder's position within the political spectrum of those years. His philosophical preference for a humanist and Social-Democratic tradition was not intended as a piece of party-political positioning, or as a declaration of ideological fundamentals. The Bauhaus was in fact pushed into this corner during Hannes Meyer's period of office because of left-wing agitation in its own ranks and by the definition of its self-proclaimed opponents, especially the up-and-coming National Socialists. Even in the Weimar days they had noted that the Bauhaus was resented by broad swathes of conservatives, and had successfully orchestrated this for their own propaganda purposes.

While the Weimar Bauhaus offered its opponents "only" people, products and ideas as targets for attack, the school building in Dessau could be built up as "the" manifestation of its users' hostile and dangerous attitudes. The building was to be burdened with this dubious reputation for decades, paradoxically from camps of opposite political colours.

The National Socialists were in the majority on the Dessau town council as early as 1931, and were thus in control of the Bauhaus as a municipal institution. The closure on 30 September 1932 was a prelude to the actual end of the school: the continued life in Berlin was more an epilogue than a genuinely new start. Once in power, the National Socialists threatened to put the Bauhaus building in the greatest possible danger. Hitler's so-called "national cultural policy" cast its shadow ahead of itself in the Dessau events, and led to art's being officially proclaimed to be art by Germans for Germans in 1935, and in 1937 to the stigmatization of avant-garde art as "degenerate". The large touring exhibition called "Entartete Kunst" (Degenerate Art)" illustrated this racially and ideologically loaded concept, using works of art to make the point, including – partly in outrageous distortion of the real state of affairs – some distinguished examples of twentieth century modern art. Paranoid and obsessively ideological constructions

were used to justify denouncing this art as "Bolshevik", "Jewish" and "un-German".¹²

The exhibition also included work by Bauhaus painters and sculptors, including Lyonel Feininger, Wassily Kandinsky, Paul Klee, Gerhard Marcks and Oskar Schlemmer. The so-called "Regierungsrichtlinien für Kunst" (Government Guidelines for Art), which were written under the jurisdiction of Josef Goebbels and first published in the *Deutscher Kunstbericht* revealed even more specifically than the propaganda exhibition that those people who were drawing up the guidelines for artistic and cultural policy in the Third Reich clearly had the Bauhaus in their sights as an ideological opponent. The manifesto claims to make clear, in its sarcastically twisted rhetoric, "what German artists expect from the government", and first under the five "expectations" listed comes the stigmatization of "box-shaped" architecture.¹³

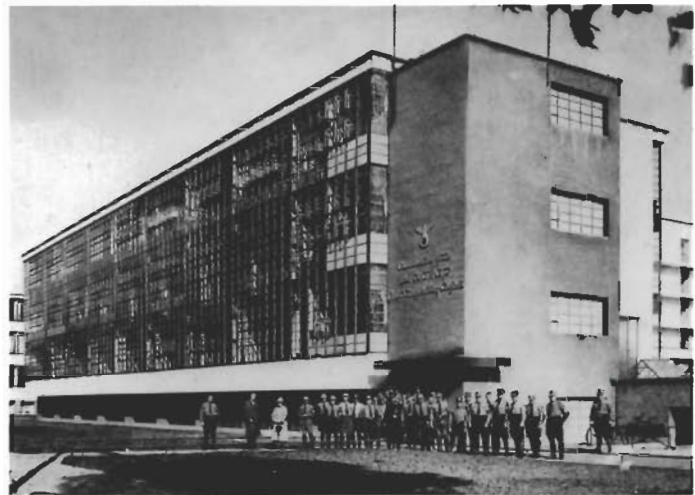
The Dessau Bauhaus was in the front rank of the buildings alluded to here, the butt of attacks on Modernism in general and the Bauhaus idea in particular. It is ironic that Gropius had provided such a tangible and conspicuous target for these attacks with his building; previously they had been compelled to concentrate on phenomena that were much less publicly visible. From then on the Bauhaus paid for its rapidly acquired international status as an incunabulum of Modern architecture by playing the role of target for its opponents' propaganda. The Bauhaus's protagonists were certain that the vehemence of the attacks reflected the Bauhaus's own strength, but this did not always prevent sometimes disastrous consequences for them. It was very easy for the Nazis to bring out their reproaches about the intellectual theories and the abstract formal design of the Bauhaus particularly effectively in the context of an uncomprehending and thus unfriendly perception of the Bauhaus building among broad sections of the population, who saw it as the product of an esoteric avant-garde. At the same time it is precisely the case of the Dessau Bauhaus that unmasks the lie behind official Nazi propaganda: when it was opportune, the steel, concrete and glass of Modern architecture by-passed bureaucratic censorship

A slightly sloping saddleback roof added to the studio building, drawings (original scale 1:100). From a newspaper report in "Die Heimat", Dessau 1933.

and was built in the industrial sphere, to benefit the Reich's economic and technological progress; it co-existed peacefully with Karl Ludwig Troost's and Albert Speer's monumental adaptations of Schinkel's neo-classicism. Research has revealed cases of co-operation between the authorities of the Third Reich and former members of the Bauhaus. These include work on the Hagenuk Machine Plant in Berlin by Ernst Neufert (1940), and Pius Pahl's iron- and steelworks in Linz, Austria (1941/42).¹⁴ This broke down the myth of the Bauhaus as an enclave of resistance to Fascism. But overall it is impossible not to recognize that the Bauhaus became a stylized image of hostility to Nazism even before the "seizure of power", and had to put up with a significant proportion of the controversy that this unleashed. When the Nazis began to determine fates in Dessau, so much hate-filled propaganda had already been directed at the Bauhaus that the building and the institution could no longer defend themselves against it effectively. The aggressive climate of this period can be felt quite openly in an article in the *Anhalter Tageszeitung* of 10 July 1932, which appealed for the Bauhaus to be pulled down after the building was inspected by National Socialist representatives of the local and regional authorities, with architect Paul Schultze-Naumburg as a co-opted expert:

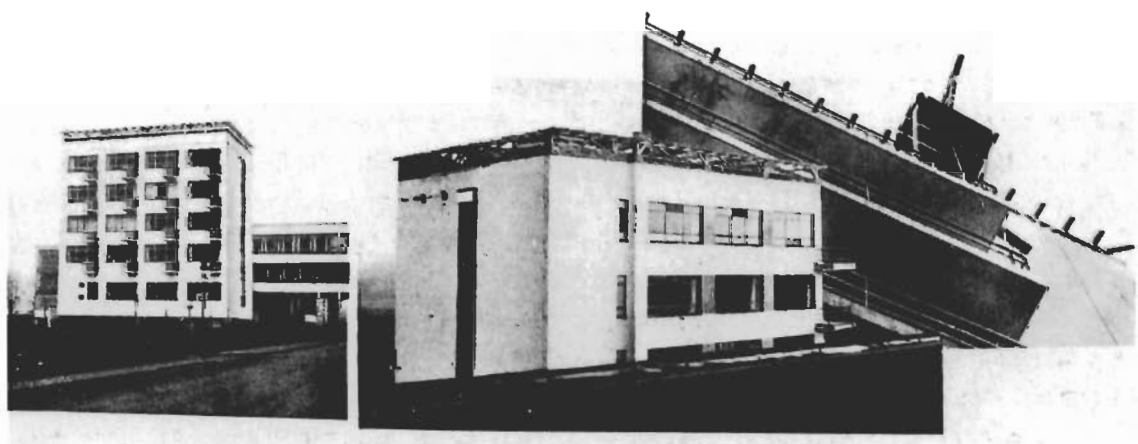
"As it will not be possible to achieve a majority for the demolition proposed by the Na-

The Bauhaus building as a Nazi training establishment for the Magdeburg-Anhalt region. The BAUHAUS lettering has been removed from the façade and replaced by emblems of the Third Reich, c. 1938. Swastika flag on the Prellerhaus, Christmas 1933.



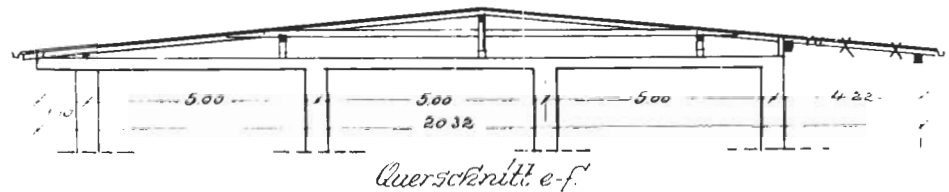
Das Bauhaus bekommt ein neues Dach.

Das Dessauer Bauhaus ist bereits wiederholt durch erhebliche bautechnische Mängel und Materialschäden unliebsam aufgefallen. So mußten schon mehrfach ausgedehnte Instandsetzungsarbeiten vorgenommen werden. Augenblicklich bekommt der eine Gebäudeteil ein neues Dach, da das alte sich im Zustande des Verfalls befand.

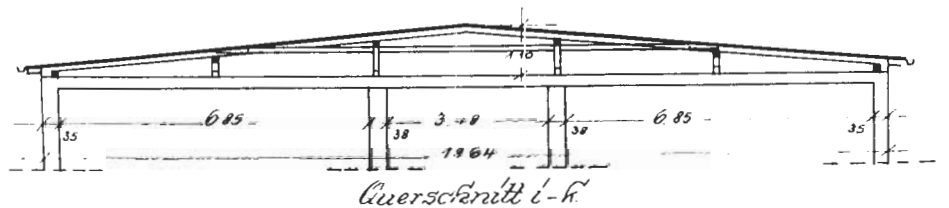


Dessau, im Juli 1933.
Der Magistrat (Stadtbaumeister)
i. V.
H. Mies

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Seitüberdachung des Werkstattbaues.

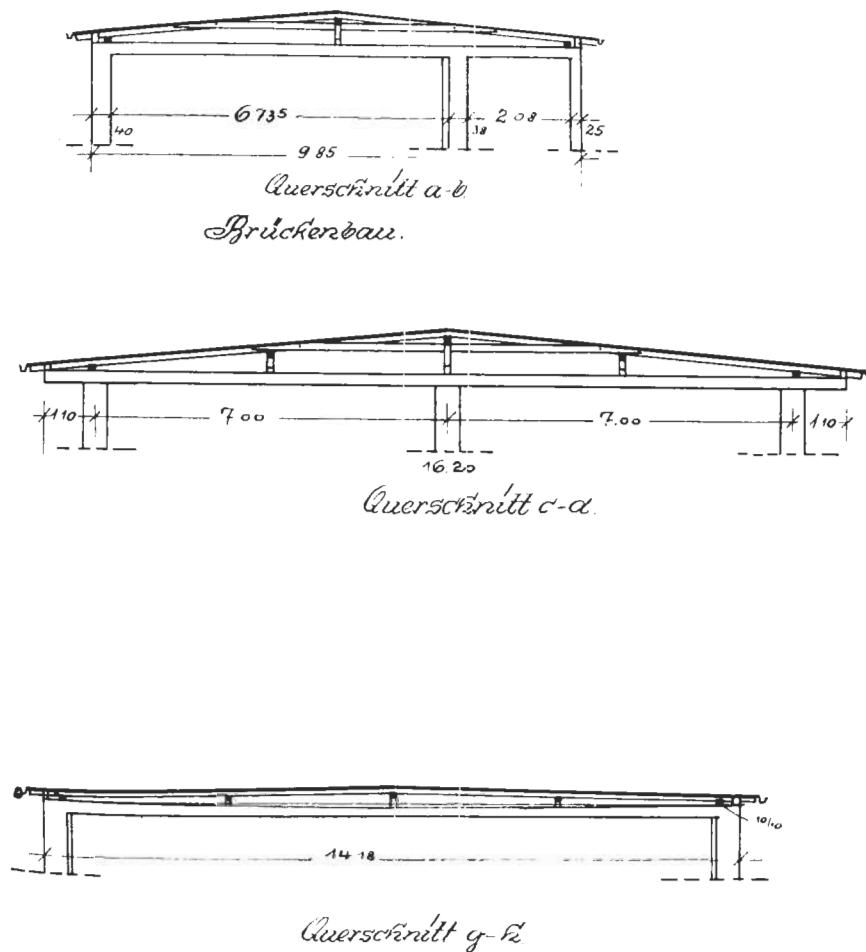


tional Socialists, it will first of all be necessary to attempt to re-use the building. This is likely to be very difficult, as there is no question of using this glass building with its iron framework either for educational or sanitary, or office or teaching purposes. Retaining it ... would be such a burden on any new owner that only a Nabob could afford this luxury. And so it will be pulled down one day whether people like it or not, even if bourgeois representatives see this as an extravagance.

When the so-called 'Hochschule für Gestaltung' disappears, German soil can be rid of one of the most important centres of Jewish and Marxist 'artistic' will. May complete demolition soon take place, and may the site of the austere glass palace in oriental taste, known locally in Dessau as the 'Aquarium', soon be occupied by homes or facilities that will offer homes and recreation to German people. 'The cloak has fallen, the duke must follow.'¹⁵

This rhetoric turns the envisaged scenario of demolition into a threatening metaphor for a fanatically poisoned mentality that despises humanity, which was to live out its full potential in the Holocaust. The Bauhaus was closed on 30 September 1932 and moved to Berlin. The Nazis' first burnings of written matter started on 1 October, not in Berlin, as is often assumed, but outside the Dessau Bauhaus. Everything printed that Ludwig Mies van der Rohe had not been able to take with him to Berlin was cleared out by the SA and the reserve police and thrown to the flames.¹⁶ This is how the attempt to destroy the Bauhaus's thinking took place, with the all-embracing aim of intellectually and physically destroying Modernism as a movement that critically analysed and commented on reality.

One thing that should not be forgotten in all the demagogic public conflicts about demolishing the Bauhaus is that there were ration-



ally justifiable objections to this architecture: Gropius has pushed through his aesthetic and functional concept regardless of the inadequate building materials and methods of his day; the building was relatively susceptible to problems from the outset, it was not easy to repair and more expensive to maintain than an average building of this type. Ultimately the Bauhaus was spared demolition – possibly because of a false conviction that the idea of the Bauhaus was at an end. More pragmatic methods for handling the ostracized architecture were accepted: in mid 1933 the municipal building office prepared plans for new, pitched roofs for the bridge, workshop wing and Prellerhaus,¹⁷ and around the turn of the year 1934/35 the first of the planned measures was completed for the Prellerhaus by building on a slightly pitched saddle roof, which was kept off-white.¹⁸ The permanent problems caused by maintaining the Bauhaus's flat roof made it easy for the authorities to

claim that the changes were being made for technical reasons. Thus old resentments threatened to come to the surface in public discussion. An article in the *Anhalter Woche* about the modification of the Prellerhaus made the rejection of Bauhaus architecture just as clear as the entirely open intention of "de-Gropiusification", when the author writes:

"The new roofing of the Bauhaus makes it quite clear to me that the form that has been found can be called entirely agreeable, and entirely fitting for a tower-like building of the kind in question here. But if people's thoughts should turn to 'de-Gropius-izing' the main building, for example, in the same way, I would advise against this most strongly. A cubic building like this would look like a stable if roofed in the above-mentioned way, while there it is at least possible to see that this frayed architecture once managed to take up some space at our expense."¹⁹



It was presumably easier for the party to use the Bauhaus for its own purposes under the new conditions: ironically enough, some rooms were taken over as offices for the Nazi Party's district administration school,²⁰ and others by Albert Speer's building staff.²¹ Spared from the demolition plans of "willing executors", the Bauhaus did finally suffer a great deal physically. In 1945, at the end of the war, Dessau was bombed and left with over eighty per cent of its building stock and almost all its industry in ruins. Camouflage with black and brown paint and an appearance on the Allies' list of buildings worth preserving did not prevent American bombs hitting the roof of the workshop and north wings. When the fires went out the top level of the classroom section had been destroyed, the workshop wing had burned out, the white plaster had burst off the building and the glass curtain façade and windows had shattered. Thus the building had lost fundamental stylistic features that had led to its canonization as a pioneer of the International Style. But the crucial fact for the future of the Bauhaus was that its structural components, in other words the reinforced concrete skeleton, had remained intact. This made it possible to use the building again immediately after some rough and ready repairs.

Liberation and early occupation: between rebuilding – and dissolution

Immediately after the end of the war the survival of the Bauhaus building moved a group of former Bauhaus members who had stayed in Dessau or come back again, and who believed in the unbroken relevance of the Bauhaus idea to make rough and ready repairs to the building and try to revive the institution. The American occupation had reinstated leading administrators from the pre-war period, and so Fritz Hesse, the liberal mayor who had brought the Bauhaus to Dessau in 1925, took over his old job and supported the efforts that were needed.

Members of the Dessau group, led by Hubert Hoffmann, were quick to recognize that they were not alone in seeking continuity in the history of the Bauhaus by reviving the historical *Schule für Gestaltung*, which had not been allowed to develop its full potential or to follow a natural course. Letters from Germany to Walter Gropius in his new home in Massachusetts in 1946 and 1948 expressed the hope that Germany would recover from twelve years of ideological domination and isolation, and that the spiritual force of a resurrected Bauhaus could serve as a source of intellectual, artistic and moral renewal. For a short time this optimistic belief that the plans could be realized seemed justified. Initiative from private individuals and groups was required in the chaos of establishment, reorganization and change of bureaucratic power, and in 1946 Fritz Hesse commissioned former Bauhaus student Hubert Hoffmann to develop plans for rebuilding in Dessau and – according to Hoffmann – to rebuild the Bauhaus as an institution. As the town's new chief architect, Hoffmann threw himself into the part enthusiastically. He was supported by a group of people who had remained in Dessau, including Georg Neidenberger, Rolf Radack, Max Ursin, Carl Marx, Carl Fieger and for a time the former Bauhaus teacher Hinnerk Scheper. Hoffmann started to develop a curriculum based on Hannes Meyer's ideas that emphasizes the academic and social aspects of architecture and town planning, rather than the artistic

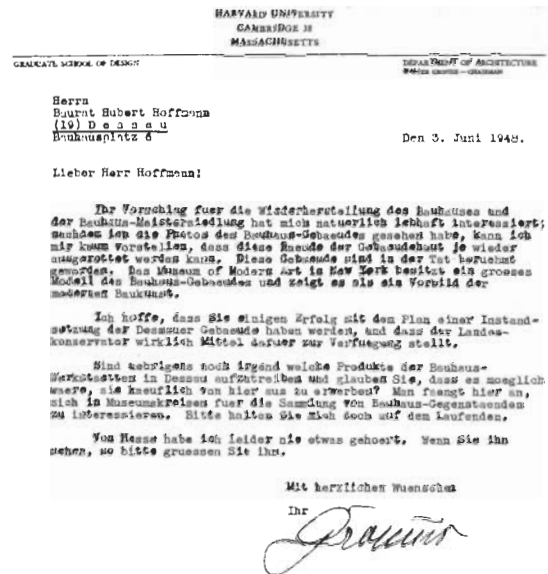
The workshop wing in 1945, with earth rampart and damage after a blaze caused by fire-bombs.
Writing above the door: "Gaststätte Seminarplatz" / „Gaststätte“, under that: „Schade-Biere“/ „Schultheiss-Bier(e)".
The north wing after the air-raid in March 1945.



side. This institution was to be housed in the Bauhaus building, as there was a feeling that it could be restored despite extensive war damage. As Walter Gropius was still seen as the undisputed authority in all matters pertaining to the Bauhaus by the majority of the Bauhaus community who had remained in Germany, Hoffmann turned to him for moral support.²² The founder of the Bauhaus replied cautiously, especially as Hoffmann was also asking him for massive material and financial support for the project. Gropius's actual views about reviving the Bauhaus are not expressed in the correspondence, but there is no doubt that he did not believe either that the building could be repaired or that it would make sense to revive the institution.²³ He was to be the man who would direct the response to the Bauhaus as much as possible in his lifetime, and he did not feel that Hubert Hoffmann was a legitimate successor or administrator of the estate, which would have been a vital signal for the efforts in Dessau. In fact he entrusted Joost Schmidt and a group of former Bauhaus members who had gathered around him in Berlin to look after the legacy as he would wish. Gropius left it to his wife Ise to refuse Hubert Hoffmann's request to help to finance the planned enterprise, partly because their own budget and those of their friends in the USA were extremely strained by the "Bauhaus Fund" – an initiative for supporting needy Bauhaus members, friends and relatives in Germany – that they had set up. Hubert Hoffmann was in fact among the people who received such care parcels. But Ise Gropius's letter also referred to the difficulty, given the anti-German sentiments in those years immediately after the war, of drumming up financial support in the States for German educational projects.²⁴

Lack of backing from the founder of the Bauhaus was not the only thing that ultimately caused the revival plan to fail. The collapse of the German economy, the falling-out between the Western Allies and the Soviet Union and the isolation and Stalinization under Russian occupation created opposing conditions. When the SED finally won the local elections in 1946 and Fritz Hesse was replaced as mayor of Dessau, "the ground on which

Gropius's reaction to the Bauhaus building's condition in a letter to Hubert Hoffmann in June 1948.



a new Bauhaus could flourish was taken away".²⁵ The group around Hoffmann split up; the Bauhaus building seemed to have been abandoned.²⁶

Even in more favourable local political conditions it would have been questionable whether the Bauhaus could have reopened successfully so shortly after the war. Cultural images and values do not disappear from one day to the next, and neither do entrenched hatred and racism. Carl Fieger complained in a letter to Walter Gropius in 1949 how much prejudices against Modernism as incorporated by the Bauhaus persisted in Dessau even after the collapse of the Third Reich:

"There is still distaste for the Bauhaus and its modern view of art in middle-class circles here. At a recent architectural meeting, when I mentioned that I wanted to build the replacement for the station building destroyed in the air raids in the best possible modern way, I was asked the horrified question: surely not in the Bauhaus style?"²⁷

Measured on a scale of successful realization of their plans, Hubert Hoffmann's, Joost Schmidt's and others' efforts to revive the Dessau

Bauhaus were a failure. But their initiative was of considerable significance for future handling of the Bauhaus heritage in Germany. It was the first sign since the institution had closed in 1933 that the Bauhaus idea had survived, and that there were people who were looking for continuity after the break. And this approach included restoring the building. Seen in this light, the repairs carried out at the time to the upper level of the vocational school wing seem less like a modest step in implementing comprehensive reconstruction plans, and more like a first record, which cannot be ignored, of an unbroken will to preserve.

German Democratic Republic: from rejection to acceptance of the inheritance

Once a building has been classified as a factor disfiguring the townscape, it is often only a tiny step to pulling it down. The Bauhaus building escaped this fate a second time thanks to the desperate shortage of accommodation in devastatingly bombed Dessau. The ruined glazing of the workshop wing had already been replaced in 1946 by walling it up to a large extent with rough, red brick, so that the building could be used as vocational school. Modern architecture's former icon was scarcely recognizable as a result: one of the things that had been destroyed was the subtly balanced rhythm of transparent and compact areas in the composition of the façade, the effect of floating lightness of the glazed volume of the workshop wing above the recessed, dark base, the graphic quality of the building, achieved by the light and dark contrast of the window frames and the white body of the building, the interplay of flat, smoothly rendered exterior surfaces with the warmly sculptural quality of the interior as seen through the window openings. Their disappearance revealed how dependent the impression made by the building was on formal and aesthetic components and their almost ornamental quality.

In 1950, barely a year after the foundation of the GDR, the Third Party Conference achieved a radical change in the country's cultural policy by adopting Andrej Ždanov's theory of So-

cialist Realism. Stalin had attacked the internationally inclined avant-garde, partly on the basis of its rupture with historical tradition and the dominance of Functionalism. He relegated art and architecture to a role serving the cause of socialism, which involved creating faithful representations of national realities in the context of revolutionary development. The Bauhaus's austere and universal forms of expression did not meet these criteria either artistically or historically. In correlation with the artificial rhetoric of National Socialism the East German government used their version of Stalinist cultural policy to declare Functionalism and thus the "Bauhaus style" to be devoid of all art, élitist, alien to the people and "un-German". The Bauhaus was linked with American cultural imperialism and was officially categorized as an excrescence relating to this. This propaganda was helped by the fact that distinguished former Bauhaus members had settled in Germany in the meantime, and that ideas were being reflected back after their original transfer. Looking at the Bauhaus's most important manifestation in Dessau, Kurt Liebkecht, the President of the Berlin Building Academy, pupil of Hans Poelzig and former colleague of Mies van der Rohe declared in Berlin in the early fifties:

"The 'products' of Bauhaus architecture are still disfiguring our cities today, like the Bauhaus's own former building in Dessau ... These buildings are out of touch with their surrounding, they are bare, primitive boxes that want to transform man himself into a machine."²⁸

Until 1950/51 the state of the Bauhaus building could be explained by the emergency situation in the post-war years, including lack of building materials and parts, but from this date the debate about what to do with the building was revived. Once more the condition of the building began to be a reliable indicator of its owners' attitudes in terms of culture and politics. The physical walling-up of the Bauhaus began to be matched by a corresponding wall that gradually built up in people's minds, resisting the memory of their common international and cultural history, even including people who used the building. A considered

voice like that of writer Ludwig Renn, who commended the Bauhaus in Neues Deutschland as the actual force for tradition, made no headway against the media propaganda.²⁹ The Bauhaus building was no longer central to the official discourse, and its rebuilding was resisted. Most of the Dessau people who used the Bauhaus at this time as a technical or vocational school had no idea of its historical identity.

The denial of the Bauhaus, after Stalin's death in 1953 and during the period of reflection about Lenin's demand for economic superiority for socialism, was followed by a phase of greater openness. In 1955 Walter Ulbricht branded the architecture that had been recognized as "national" in the past few years, with its lavishly designed façades and monumental blocks, as too expensive and thus counterproductive for economical building. He appealed to the building industry to enter into long-term competition with West Germany, especially in terms of residential building. The developments that this set in train led to a reassessment of the Bauhaus and Functionalism. This made it possible for Bauhaus supporters, who had been rendered silent for a time, to make gradual progress, encouraged by the Building Academy, and especially by Hans Schmidt. In 1965, in preparation for the fortieth anniversary of the opening of the Bauhaus building, the built-up façade of the workshop wing was taken down and replaced with alternating horizontal bands of windows with steel frames and concrete window-breasts. The staircase windows were also reconstructed, and so were the rooms in the vocational school wing. The measures were implemented on the basis of rebuilding plans produced by students at the Weimar School of Architecture based on the condition of the buildings at the time. There Bernd Grönwald in particular deserves credit for his promotion of the Bauhaus issue.

In 1974 the government made the Bauhaus a grade one listed building as a historical monument of national and international importance, and initiated an authentic reconstruction programme, which was carried out under the direction of architect Wolfgang Paul. Many details,

like the curtain wall, were so carefully reconstructed that the Bauhaus practically regained its original appearance and made visitors forget that they were in a building that was largely a replica of the ruined original. The Bauhaus was raised from the status of mere monument when in December 1976, on the fiftieth anniversary of its opening, the idea of the Bauhaus as an institution was reactivated by the foundation of the "Wissenschaftlich-Kulturelles Zentrum" (Academic and Cultural Centre). The achievements of its original users were acknowledged, and the Bauhaus now served as an educational institution, cultural centre and conference venue. Work started in the same year on collecting original records and art objects relating to the Bauhaus. This state act represented a new dimension in a breakthrough for the Bauhaus tradition, which was now also an official state basis for the legitimization of industrial building.

The change of position could be openly justified after Erich Honecker, in 1971, in his role as the new Party Chairman, declared the GDR to be an independent state, and thus extinguished the prospects of reunification in the long term. The European détente policy initiated in Helsinki, and a newly established awareness of the country's own political and cultural identity, led to a relatively liberal cultural policy, along with a greater readiness to acknowledge the heritage of the whole of Germany, which also included the Bauhaus. Architecture and art critics like Karlheinz Hüter, S.H. Begegnau, Christian Schädlich and Kurt Milde had helped to build bridges to justify this. Milde identified the origins of Functionalism in the Russian Constructivists Moisei Ginzburg and Victor, Leonid and Alexander Vesnin. For the next thirteen years the Bauhaus building, which in its design derived from universal rather than national design aspirations, served as a symbol for the government's new international approach and also for the GDR's modern national culture. With reference to the principles of socialist town planning and architecture, Ewald Henn, then president of the GDR's federation of architects, emphasized the official points of view that had already been stated during Honecker's change of course.³⁰ At that time, all the statements

and ceremonial speeches were written in the theoretical and historical department of the GDR Building Academy. Henn's statement reflects an art-historical position as represented, for example, in 1983 by Adalbert Behr, an art historian and member of the Building Academy:

"The Bauhaus, a democratic movement and pioneer of new architecture and art, which was bound to fail when faced with imperialist forms of government, is part of the GDR's rich national cultural heritage, and it is being carefully looked after and vitally adopted. Many of the Bauhaus's aims in architecture and product design, in art education and research have become reality in our socialist society, whose efforts are directed at creating a built environment that is worthy of human beings, and beautiful, that will enable all members of society largely to satisfy their material and cultural needs."³¹

In the seventies the theory of Functionalism became the dominant aesthetic doctrine in the sphere of architecture and design; Lothar Kühne and Karin Hirdina were among those responsible for this.³² At the same time West Germany was reproached for using functionalist – and synonymously this meant socialist – architecture for the purpose of masking capitalist interests, which to a certain extent implied a claim to be the sole representatives in terms of managing the heritage and also the institutional tradition.³³ On the other hand the history of the Bauhaus was now almost unanimously accepted on the level of national and international research; at this time the controversies were restricted to theoretical and interpretative points. On a few occasions discussions in this field took place in the Bauhaus in the form of Bauhaus colloquia as an internal-left German theoretical discussion. The building itself – surrounded by grey houses, some of which were very much in need of repair, in a formerly upper-middle-class residential area – gleamed white and glassy after its restoration, and looked like a privileged intellectual enclave.

In 1986 the GDR building ministry ordered the opening of the "Bauhaus Dessau. Zentrum für Gestaltung" (Centre for Design), and integ-

Workshop wing on 1 May 1976, decorated with the GDR's hammer and sickle flag.

Competition public presentation, design by Fiedler/Fehsecke, 1988/89.



81

rated the existing Academic and Cultural Centre into the new institution as the department Sammlung.³⁴ Two other departments were also set up, the Akademie and the experimental Werkstatt.

After 1989: breaks and continuity

The institutional structure established in 1986 was retained when the Bauhaus was taken over by the new Land of Sachsen-Anhalt in 1990. The name did not change until 1994, when the Bauhaus Dessau Foundation, funded by the Federal Republic, the Land and the city, was set up as one of the "beacon projects" in the new East German Länder within a united Germany. Its act of foundation lays down that its task is now to preserve the heritage of the historical Bauhaus and make it accessible to the public, to pass on its ideas, and to make contributions to questions relating to design in today's en-



Light projections "Lichtbrücke" and "Manifest" put the Bauhaus centre-stage during Mischa Kuball's "Bauhaus-BLOCK" project, 1992.





Dessau Bauhaus, corner of the workshop wing, 1994.
Dessau Bauhaus Foundation information material of the 1990s.



vironment with a view to the ideas and approaches of the historical Bauhaus.

Rapid changes of use and wear and tear caused by greatly increased visitor numbers have left their mark on the Bauhaus building today. Structural deficiencies have also made their presence felt again, twenty years after it was last refurbished. For this reason, public and other resources are being used to fund a careful restoration appropriate to its listed status by 2001; the building's historical significance will be the measure of the quality of this work. Its significance was again underlined in late 1996 when the Bauhaus building, along with the masters' houses in Dessau and the Bauhaus premises in Weimar were placed on the UNESCO World Heritage List, due to their historical significance but at the same time as a result of the thematic approach to the nomination, which once more stresses the unity of the Bauhaus building and the Bauhaus school and movement. The inscription states that the building represents a key work of architecture as influenced by the Bauhaus, inseparably linked with the origins of the Modern movement, which revolutionized artistic and architectural thinking and activity in the 20th century.



- 1 Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, quoted in: Magdalena Droste, *Bauhaus 1919-1933*, Cologne 1991.
- 2 Hans Maria Wingler, *The Bauhaus*. Weimar, Dessau, Berlin, Chicago. Cambridge/Mass., 7th printing 1986, p. 397.
- 3 „Kunst und Technik – eine neue Einheit“ (Art and technology – a new unity) was the title of a lecture with which Walter Gropius announced a change of direction for the Bauhaus programme on the occasion of the Bauhaus Week in 1923. This was also the central theme of Walter Gropius, *Brevier für Bauhausmitglieder*, draft manuscript, presumably spring 1924, Bauhaus-Archiv Berlin, Gropius estate.
- 4 This is particularly true of the American response, especially in terms of the formulation of the International Style by Henry-Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson in 1932. Cf.: Margret Kentgens-Craig, *Bauhaus-Architektur. Die Rezeption in Amerika, 1919-1936*, Frankfurt am Main etc., 1993, p. 116 ff.
- 5 Walter Gropius, letter to Albert Hadda, 20 October 1946, Harvard University, Houghton Library, Gropius Papers.
- 6 Reginald R. Isaacs, Walter Gropius. *Der Mensch und sein Werk*, 2 vols., vol. 1, Berlin 1983, p. 358.
- 7 Peter Gay, *Weimar Culture*, London 1968.
- 8 Walter Gropius, *Die soziologischen Grundlagen der Minimalwohnung für die städtische Industriebevölkerung*, lecture on the occasion of the 2nd International Congress for „Neues Bauen“, Frankfurt am Main, 24-27 October 1929, in: *Die Justiz* 5, 1930, pp. 454-466.
- 9 Ulrich Beck, *Risikogesellschaft: Auf dem Weg in eine andere Moderne*, Frankfurt am Main 1996.
- 10 Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, *Korrespondenz zur Schließung des Dessauer Bauhauses*, Stiftung Bauhaus Dessau, Archiv der Sammlung.
- 11 The „Entartete Kunst“ exhibition opened in Munich on 19 July 1937.
- 12 Carbon copy of a manuscript by Dr. Nonn, a government official, undated, op. cit. note 5.
- 13 *Regierungsrichtlinien für Kunst*, first published in: *Deutscher Kunstbericht*, quoted in: Stefanie Barron (ed.), *Entartete Kunst. Das Schicksal der Avant-Garde im Nazi-Deutschland*, exhibition catalogue, Berlin 1992, p. 13. The exhibition had originally been conceived for the Los Angeles Museum of Art and was opened there in 1991.
- 14 Winfried Nerdinger, *Bauhaus-Architekten im „Dritten Reich“*, in: W. Nerdinger (ed.), *Bauhaus-Moderne im Nationalsozialismus*, Munich 1993, pp. 153-178. Two publications had already appeared in the United States in the mid-sixties that identified co-operation between some Bauhaus artists and architects with the Nazis, see: Sibyl Moholy-Nagy, *Die Diaspora*, in: *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 24, 1965, pp. 24-26, and also: Barbara Miller Lane, *Architecture and Politics in the Third Reich, 1918-1945*, Cambridge/Mass. 1968.
- 15 Council chairman Hoffmann (Nationalsozialistische Arbeiterpartei), *Was wird aus dem Bauhaus?* in: *Anhalter Tageszeitung* (Dessau), 10 July 1932, in: Hans Maria Wingler, *Das Bauhaus, 1919-1933*, Weimar, Dessau, Berlin and the Chicago successor from 1937, 2nd ed., Bramsche 1968, p. 182.
- 16 *Chronik der Bauhausgeschichte*, unpublished manuscript, Stiftung Bauhaus Dessau, Archiv der Sammlung.
- 17 Construction drawings for roofing the Bauhaus building, cross-sections a-b, c-d, g-h, e-f, i-k, *Der Magistrat* (Stadtbauamt), Stadtarchiv Dessau.
- 18 *Anhaltische Abendzeitung*, no. 8, 10 January 1934; also: *Anhalter Anzeiger*, no. 34, 9 February 1934, Stadtarchiv Dessau.
- 19 *Die Bauhausbedachung*, in: *Anhalter Woche*, no. 3, 21 January 1934.
- 20 *Anhaltische Abendzeitung*, no. 8, 10 January 1934, Stadtarchiv Dessau.
- 21 *Chronik der Nutzung des Bauhausgebäudes*, Stiftung Bauhaus Dessau, Archiv der Sammlung.
- 22 Hubert Hoffmann, *Briefe an Walter Gropius*, 12 January 1946 and 12 October 1946, op. cit. note 5; cf. also: Christian Grohn, *Die Bauhaus-Idee und ihre Rezeption an künstlerischen Ausbildungsstätten in Deutschland nach 1945*, dissertation, Hamburg 1985, pp. 60-70.
- 23 Walter Gropius, letter to d J.W. Hess, 9 January 1948, op. cit. note 5.
- 24 Ise Gropius, letter to Hubert Hoffmann, 3 March 1947, op. cit. note 5.
- 25 Hubert Hoffmann, letter to Walter Gropius, 20 July 1947, op. cit. note 5.
- 26 For Hubert Hoffmann's attempt to revive the Bauhaus cf.: Stiftung Bauhaus Dessau (ed.), ... *das Bauhaus zerstört: 1945-1947: das Bauhaus stört ...* Dessau 1996.
- 27 Carl Fieger, letter to Walter Gropius, 1 January 1949, op. cit. note 5.
- 28 Kurt Liebke, quote in: Thomas Hoscislowski, *Das Bauhaus und seine Rolle in der DDR*, in: *Bauwelt* 28, 1990, pp. 1434-1439.
- 29 Cf. Simone Hain, *Kolonialarchitektur? Die Stalinallee im Kontext internationaler Ästhetikdebatten seit 1930*, in: H. Engel/W. Ribbe (ed.), *Karl-Marx-Allee: Magistrale in Berlin. Die Wandlung der sozialistischen Prachtstraße zur Hauptstraße des Berliner Ostens*, Berlin 1996, pp. 74-101.
- 30 Cf. Thomas Hoscislowski, *Das Bauhaus und seine Rolle in der DDR*, *Bauwelt* 28, 1990, pp. 1438-39.
- 31 Adalbert Behr, *Das Bauhaus Dessau*, 3rd ed., Leipzig 1983, p. 15.
- 32 Simone Hain, *ABC und DDR. Drei Versuche, Avantgarde mit Sozialismus in Deutschland zu verbinden*, in: G. Feist/E. Gillen/B. Vierneisel (ed.), *Kunstdokumentation 1945-1990 SBZ/DDR, Aufsätze, Berichte, Materialien*, Cologne 1996, pp. 430-477.
- 33 Thomas Hoscislowski, *Das Bauhaus und seine Rolle in der DDR*, *Bauwelt* 28, 1990, pp. 430-477.
- 34 Lutz Schöbe, Wolfgang Thöner (ed.), *Stiftung Bauhaus Dessau. Die Sammlung. Ostfildern*, Dessau 1995.

Klaus von Beyme

The Bauhaus as a political metaphor



The Bauhaus was a political issue of the first order. Even aesthetes who required that art and politics should be kept strictly apart did not deny that, long before the system theories of the second (autopoietic) generation declared that such a division was essential. The brutal closure by the Nazis and the legendary promotion of the Bauhaus as a German ideology for justifying a different, better Germany meant that the sociological question about the extent to which the Bauhaus contributed to its own downfall by perceiving its role falsely, and also the influence of conflicting tendencies in art and society, was asked only sporadically. It was posed most pointedly in a sociological dissertation. The prevailing image was that of a conflict-free symbiosis of individualists developing as independent geniuses.¹

In retrospect, Gropius saw the fate of the Weimar Republic and the Bauhaus as tragic parallels: both wanted to break down ossified structures and both were brought down by the same brutal forces of reaction. Both experienced the build-up of political forces on the right and left. Hannes Meyer, whom Gropius portrayed in retrospect as a liar in the clothing of a communist infiltrator who pulled the wool over everyone's eyes, speeded up the dissolution of the Bauhaus because it "acquired the reputation of listing to the left"² It already had this reputation in Gropius's day, otherwise it would not have had to leave Weimar, but under Meyer the popular attacks were given better ammunition. Elsewhere Gropius denied that there was a parallel between the Bauhaus and Neues Bauen and "any political system",³ but political parallels cannot be defused from this source. The letter was written by Gropius from London to the editor of the English newspaper the News Chronicle. It had unmistakable tactical intentions: Gropius was protecting himself from being used as a contemporary witness for Neues Bauen against Nazi barbarism so that he would not get into difficulties as a German citizen even in Nazi Germany.

Constituting an innovative group of artists is even more prone to tendencies of inclusion and exclusion than other group formation processes. These show up in three dimensions:

1. Inclusion of a pluralistically conceived innovative community of artists and protection of the group by friendship, co-operation and autonomy for the masters.
2. Exclusion of this community by surroundings that have been politicized in a hostile fashion and development of programmatic contradiction as a response to challenges from the surrounding world.
3. Differentiation processes in the group and exclusion of individual parts of the group as a result of splitting into factions.

1. Inclusion of the group

Social movements are often explained by the resources approach. Resources are above all the leading staff, new ideas and organizational talent. Gropius provided the leading staff with organizational talent. Two factors helped to hold the group together, a common programme and common features within the way of life.

The programme

The failed revolution of 1918 had released a number of impulses for revolutionizing art. The Bauhaus programme cannot be understood without the ideas of the Werkbund and the Arbeitsrat für Kunst. Arts and Crafts on the one side and humanistic socialism on the other were present from the outset as an inherent contradiction: the programme of the Staatliches Bauhaus in Weimar from 1919 – despite Gropius's double function – sounded very moderate in comparison with the guidelines formulated by Bruno Taut for the Arbeitsrat für Kunst in Berlin. There were no anarchic outbursts against the state: for example iconoclastic passages like "removing artistically valueless monuments and of all buildings whose artistic value is out of proportion to the value of their material if used otherwise, uniform direction of entire urban districts and a demand for a permanent experimental site";⁴ it is surprising that conservative architects like Paul Schmitthenner or even Heinrich Tessenow were prepared to sign statements of this kind. The concept of the artist as a craftsman and the removal of the "arrogant barrier" between

them were the only emotive libertarian and socialist propositions to remain in Gropius's programme. "The cathedral of Socialism" of which a programme essay for the 1923 Bauhaus exhibition had dreamed had been rendered harmless in Feininger's woodcut *Kathedrale*. The "new structure of the future ... which will one day rise toward heaven from the hands of a million workers like the crystal symbol of a new faith"⁵ offered the conservatives compensation for the relics of class thinking in the programme. The other programme points about "re-unification of all art-and-craft disciplines" chimed with the common sense of the idea of a universal work of art that was widespread in the left-hand and right-hand spectrum of models available at the time.

The Bauhaus metaphor, which suggestively brought "cathedral" and "socialism" together, was not able to remain as harmonious as in Feininger's frontispiece: most teachers at the Bauhaus had been members of the humanist and revolutionary November Group, even the more esoteric painters like Itten or Klee, who later started to oppose Gropius. Schlemmer noted in his diary in 1927 that it was malicious to remove the metaphor of the cathedral of socialism from its historical context: "Is it not true that the majority of the German people wanted to build the cathedral of socialism in 1918? ... Is socialism not a concept, an ethic that is above parties?"⁶ This ethical socialism, about which it was possible to agree at the time, was simply identified with democracy or the "people's state", and was not intended party-politically.

Even László Moholy-Nagy promoted socialism in his own way with his enthusiasm for technology, despite his disappointments with the Soviet communism in Hungary of Béla Kun, whom he had originally seen as a Messiah: "Happiness is created by the spirit that inspires technology, it is a socialism of awareness."⁷ It is not surprising that the orthodox Marxists thought that he was just an idealistic enthusiast when they heard pronouncements of this kind. Despite the charisma of Gropius, a group of friends who were only slightly politicized could not sustain an idea of this kind in the rational running of an institution. Bombastic

libertarian metaphors could not be maintained in the everyday life of the school in permanent political form, because the masters could only agree that what they would most like to do was get out of politics. Kandinsky even made great play of the idea that he never read a newspaper because he was not interested in politics.

The thrust of the Bauhaus programme thrived on the notion of an non-differentiated society. This would not have done any harm as a pipe-dream. But a politically hostile outside world saw the "November group" as synonymous with the "November criminals", whose left-wing radicalism did not have to be proved in individual cases.

Common features of the way of life

The Bauhaus never attempted to become an artistic community. But its integrating force was based on friendship rather than on a programme; sometimes this friendship, as in the relationship between Gerhard Marcks and Gropius, had to cover differences in terms of their thinking. In retrospect, Marcks wrote to Ise Gropius in 1969: "For me, Walter was a friend with obstacles. We were bound by our youthful friendship and our 'Berlin race' ... Artistically, as a sculptor and an incorrigible Romantic, I was never able to share the faith in progress that the architect acquired from technology."⁸ A group of friends had taken over the institution, which was dead after van de Velde's departure in 1914, and redesigned it in a revolutionary fashion. At first, appointments were made by acclamation, almost as if within the family. When Lyonel Feininger asked Arthur Behne if the Bauhaus also needed painters, he received the answer: "You are already on the list."⁹

Nobody ever tried to achieve a homogeneous artistic concept. Despite its name, the Bauhaus did not start to develop architecture until 1927. Even today it is judged above all by its painters. There was never a Bauhaus school – like the schools associated with traditional academies from Düsseldorf to Munich. At first the degree of consensus between the painters was striking, but it started to crumble with Moholy's tendency to-

wards technical independence. Monumental architecture became the symbol of a new community, a metaphor for an intact society. Problems were to be approached collectively – not individually. What was later¹⁰ called the "International Style", "Architectural Rationalism" or "Functionalism" had not yet emerged clearly, except in a few crystalline metaphors. But there was a turning away from Expressionist tendencies to internalize. A mood of rational optimism about the solubility of architectural and social problems became accepted, rather than pessimistic Expressionism. Nevertheless, the *Arbeitsrat für Kunst* was later linked with Expressionism, and the Bauhaus preambles were also addicted to Expressionist bombast. The quarrel about Expressionism in thirties émigré magazines then often – as in the case of Gottfried Benn or Emil Nolde – saw latent Fascism within Expressionism *ex tunc*,¹¹ as though there had not been a whiff of Expressionism about a great deal of subsequent *Neue Sachlichkeit* and socially committed realism.

For many masters the unity of work and life was embodied above all in the legendary Bauhaus celebrations. Others, even László Moholy-Nagy, the suspected "technocrat", saw life and work at the Bauhaus as so fused together that the word "leisure" was struck out of their vocabulary.¹² The sectarian spirit of the students around Johannes Itten in particular moved in the direction of integration through a "total institution". The Ministry of Culture allowed students to be put up in the students' studios because of lack of living space.¹³ Conflicts caused by living together threatened to exacerbate work conflicts.

Theosophy, anthroposophy and religious doctrine were in demand in the early days of the Bauhaus, and not just in the restricted circle of Itten's students. Schlemmer analysed the mood of the times in his manifesto for the 1923 Bauhaus exhibition: "The triumphs of industry and technology before the war and their orgy within the annihilation in the course of the war, wakened a passionate romanticism that was a blazing protest against the materialism and mechanization of art and life. The need of the times was also a spiritual need. A cult of the subconscious, the uninterpre-

table, an inclination towards mysticism and sectarianism was appropriate to a search for the last things."¹⁴ Gropius's resistance to obscurantism affected future appointments. Kandinsky and Moholy-Nagy set a course for rational constructivism.¹⁵ But Gropius does not seem to have been particularly aware of Moholy-Nagy's lifestyle, because although his metal sculptures contrasted starkly with Itten's mysticism, he had been entirely captivated by the radical-vegetarian Mazdaznan sect even before his time at the Bauhaus.¹⁶ It was not until the institution was made more technological and economically viable that quasi-religious enthusiasms were marginalized.

The "company constitution"

The more an in-group loses the bases of a common way of life, the more formal institutions have to make it easier to find a consensus.

Anyone who was afraid, while Gropius was working in the *Arbeitsrat* and the Bauhaus, that he would introduce a council-style system in the Bauhaus, need not in fact have worried. The administration showed a moderated hierarchy. The director retained the power of decision. Even non-political figures like Klee and Kandinsky objected to this from time to time, but this did not prevent Kandinsky from feeling that he was actually entitled to the directorship after Gropius's departure. Only the design masters had voting rights in the masters' council. The craft masters were there only in an advisory capacity. Student



representatives were allowed to state their case. Members' participation was not guaranteed by statute, but tolerated for reasons of tactical ingenuity. But as the Bauhaus was politicized the representation of student interests became more radical. Schlemmer was full of praise after his departure for Breslau: "Here there are no student revolts, no night meetings, no questions that go round and round in circles ... " Even Gropius occasionally became alarmed because of the ghosts that he had put up with but could not get rid of. In March 1924 – long before the turbulent final period – he wrote to his wife about the Moholy conflict: "There is a students' meeting tonight, and I intend to let the ghosts collide with each other and burst, to clear the air a little. I've some experience of this ... There's a lot of trouble in the Bauhaus at the moment, and some people deserve to be beaten. Some students have been disgracefully rude to Moholy, and all because they've suddenly all got this bee in their bonnet about not needing any masters."¹⁷

But the Bauhaus constitution should not be judged against modern participation models. Despite Naphtali the Weimar Republic never got beyond the "constitutional factory" in its firms. Without the masters' position Gropius would not have been able to keep such individual artists as Kandinsky or Klee in line for so long.

Unity started to crumble above all when it was a matter of increasing the workload and reducing salaries. Gropius tried to extract a ten per cent salary cut from his masters in 1926. They finally agreed on five per cent.¹⁸ Kandinsky and Klee offered the strongest opposition. But they were extremely happy to fight for the title of professor, against early Bauhaus resolutions. Admittedly Kandinsky's experience in Russian academies was quick to sense how this essentially "worthless question" would be resolved: the artists want the title of master at first, and then revert to being professors. The Land of Anhalt finally gave the masters the title of professor. When egalitarian pay rises are not possible, then recourse is often made to fundamentally symbolic gratification, in working life as well. But Gropius was upset by this departure from his original ideas. He wrote to his



wife at the time: "Yesterday evening with the Kandinskys, both fat and brown, both very relaxed and well, but unfortunately I can see that he and Klee are increasingly using the Bauhaus as a sinecure, pity, another disappointment."¹⁹

Exclusion of the group by a politicized society

The fact that the Bauhaus drew on the Novembergruppe for programme and personnel made it a metaphor in a cultural struggle from the outset. Neues Bauen was promoted above all by northern and central German local authorities and building co-operatives who were close to the Social Democrats. Gropius wrote proudly to his mother: "My craftsmen's manifesto is in Vorwärts today."²⁰ Gropius constantly insisted throughout the period of political conflict that he has never belonged to a political party. But he was considered to be an SPD "sympathizer". Right-wing propagandists never forgave for designing a memorial for the main cemetery in Weimar, commissioned by the trade unions, to those who fell in the Kapp putsch. The SPD occasionally exaggerated its leading role in the discovery of Neues Bauen. Neues Bauen's success in a defeat-shattered country like Germany is inexplicable without preparatory work by the Werkbund, during which middle-class reformers worked alongside left-wing ideologists. Occasionally approaches by left-wing liberal exponents to the ruling powers went as far as collaborating with the Wilhelminian regime and its imperialist tendencies. The old coalition collapsed as the Werkbund's ideas shifted to the left, and many people who had started as reformers within the Werkbund

ended up in Schultze-Naumburg's "Kampfbund". Even Mies van der Rohe signed Schultze-Naumburg's loyalty address to Hitler.²¹

Part of this coalition continued on a small scale. As a rule it was difficult for Social-Democrat reformers to implement their ideas without middle-class politicians, as in Frankfurt, from Adickes to Landmann (DDP). Fritz Hesse, the mayor of Dessau who invited the Bauhaus there was a liberal of this kind who put through his ideas with the help of the SPD. When the little town of Celle commissioned Otto Haesler to build the first Neues Bauen estate by the "Italian Garden", this could not be ascribed to an SPD majority in such a conservative town. It was an act of left-wing politics at best in Magdeburg, where Bruno Taut became municipal architect in 1921, even though this radical applicant did not have the usual university training; but it was scarcely "a great achievement by the workers of Magdeburg", as one GDR eulogist suggested.²²

Co-operation within the reforming coalition was seldom free of conflict. Gropius's relationship with the SPD increasingly deteriorated, and other exponents of Neues Bauen had similar experiences. Martin Wagner, one of the few town planners who was a party member, even caused a sensation by leaving the party in 1931. In Dessau Heinrich Peus, the publisher of the Deutsches Volksblatt and SPD chairman in the town, increased the right-wing smear campaign against Gropius by asserting that he had made an improper profit from the fees for the Törten housing estate. Gropius replied: "I have been fighting for years to reduce the cost of residential building and I am recognised in this field, and now I have to put up with the fact that the very people for whom I do this work are being stirred up against me."²³ Even national papers tending towards left-wing satire attacked the reformers with caricatures and texts like:

*"High upon the ruined houses
hark how Mr. Gropius grouses" or
"In his ruthlessly consistent fight against ornamentation a Dessau architect has cut off his own and his family's ears".²⁴*



Ober auf des Hauses Trümmern,
Hört man den Herrn Gropius wimmern.



When the Bauhaus closed in 1932, the parallel later drawn by Gropius between the Weimar Republic and the Bauhaus came to an end: while the SPD courageously voted against Hitler's seizure of power in the Reichstag, it merely abstained over the closure of the Dessau Bauhaus. Mayor Hesse and the Communists stood alone in voting for the Bauhaus.

Gropius's behaviour in political conflicts – as his biographer noted – was inclined to "simple and innocent trust".²⁵ And yet in the matter of stabilizing the group outside and inside Gropius showed considerable leadership qualities, which led to the doctrinaire Bruno Taut's dismissal from the Arbeitsrat as early as 1918. Gropius mobilized political support, as in early 1920, when opponents of the Bauhaus launched their first campaign with a petition to the Ministry of State in Weimar. As a cultural and political operator Gropius mobilized support from the Werkbund, the Arbeitsrat, the Musikgesellschaft and other associations. In 1924 he successfully organized demonstrations for the Bauhaus in which the coalition extended from Reichskunstwart Redslob and the conservative publisher Eugen Diederichs to trade union organisations like the ADGB and the Verband sozialer Baubetriebe.²⁶

Gropius was an appropriate catalyst for strategic heterogeneous alliances. He came out of the First World War as a conservative admirer of Ludendorff who was not afraid of anti-American statements. Even in the Nazi period he behaved like a German nationalist, painfully concerned to avoid a confrontation with his country, and flirting in his letters with his "constructive, state-sustaining ways".²⁷ While Hannes Meyer, his successor, put the project at risk by a doctrinaire hardening of attitudes, and Mies van der Rohe, after Meyer's departure, tried to rescue it with cool hardness in principle but Rhenish couldn't-care-less-ishness in the way he went about it, on many occasions Gropius really did bridge the inner contradictions of conflicting artistic natures. He fought doggedly to avoid political demonstrations and to renounce the striking of subcultural attitudes and a bohemian approach. He demonstrated his negotiating skills in

an appearance in the Thuringian parliament, in which he stressed that the Bauhaus meant a continuation of tradition, and not a break with it.²⁸

In view of the conflicts within a group of friends subject to multi-dimensional stress in terms of their roles, it is not the collapse that is remarkable, but rather the fact that for a decade Gropius managed to steer the ship of a new organizational form for art through the turbulent waves of a mood of latent civil war. Georg Muche recalled: "Everything at the Bauhaus happened for Gropius or was directed against him. He had the great ability to direct to a precise goal forces that were tense to the point of breaking apart. ... He overcame and combined resistance through ingenuity and a courageous heart."²⁹

Despite Gropius's capable management, he was able to neutralize a series of contradictions at the Bauhaus only with difficulty. As far as internal conflicts could be isolated, Gropius usually managed to settle them. But a number of the conflicts became politicized and thus acquired system-destroying force.

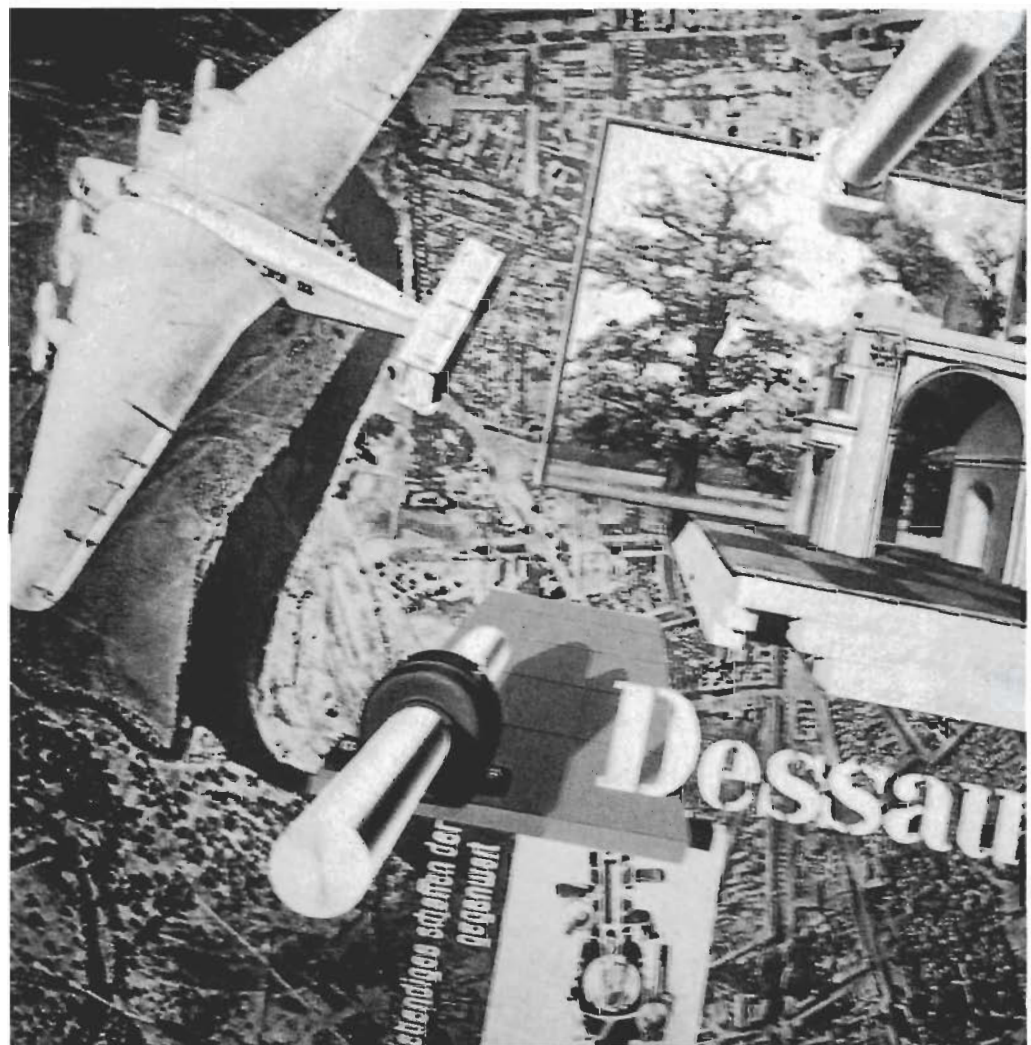
In Weimar the Bauhaus was based not just on an urban initiative but on the activities of the regional government. The little town was averse to the experiment. This was not changed by the well-meaning support of do-gooder noble ladies who tried to introduce wild Bauhaus luminaries and good little scions of middle-class houses to each other – experiments that at first merely reinforced mutual prejudice. Dessau – at first considered by Gropius only with a telegram from Italy saying "Dessau impossible"³⁰ – was thus the better solution. The town was more behind the Bauhaus, and for a time it was possible to absorb changes of mood in local government – unlike Thuringia in 1925.

The Bauhaus suffered from confrontation with the traditional art academy business. In bleak economic times art needs at least a modicum of solidarity. The latter was undermined by the Bauhaus. Attacking academicism was part of the attitude of all progressive artists. Thus it was possible for the Arbeitsrat to campaign for the dissolution of the royal Akademie der Künste if neces-

sary. Gropius described the phenomenon in an even more concrete way in 1923: "The Akademie's fundamental educational error was to commit itself to extraordinary genius, rather than to average talent, while nevertheless training a huge number of small talents just to draw and paint, of whom scarcely one in a thousand became a real architect or painter. The greater number of these one-sided academicians, trained one-sidedly and full of false hopes, remained condemned to practising a sterile art, unequipped for the struggles of life, and had to be counted among the social drones, rather than being made useful for popular working life by appropriate training."³¹ Insult was added to injury, and this helped to drive quite a few people into Schultze-Naumburg's "Kampfbund" at a later stage.

The gulf between arts and crafts could not be bridged by well-meaning manifestos

from the Arbeitsrat and the Bauhaus. The crafts side responded with fears for its status, it was more prone to right-wing extremism in the twenties than other groups of workers and the economic crisis increasingly gave their fears a real basis. Gropius still failed to appreciate this in 1968, shortly before he died, when he wrote in a letter: "Attacks by the local craft firms were utterly and completely political: the Bauhaus sold nothing but new model designs, and so was no competition to them." Hannes Meyer's retrospective view, as a Marxist, gave a clearer analysis of the social conflicts than Gropius's: "Individual groups of workers ... saw their existence threatened by the 'new building' that the Bauhaus was propagating. There were no more pitched roofs with tile coverings, the wired glass put paid to craft windows."³² In terms of fact Gropius was right, though fears about status, as



social scientists know better than most, are not always an appropriate response to real threats. There were fears that traditional abilities would be devalued, with loss of income in the future. The craft wing did not accept the artists' verbal approaches, and denounced the new synthesis of arts and crafts as dilettantism. Many things were difficult for good citizens to bear. Georg Muche remembered, with a few passing sympathies for Dada: "The Bauhaus people knew how Dada was done, and they knew all too well how to stand concepts and values on their heads." He went on to say: "They did it without wounding, and that made them different from the Dadaists." But it seems that it was too much for the good craftsmen of Thuringia to make themselves into connoisseurs of serious or wounding nonsense.

The first Bauhaus exhibition was not seen as an unqualified success, even by experts. The synthesis of arts and crafts was by no means a subject of consensus at that stage. Gropius came across considerable reservation in the thirties even in the USA, surprisingly enough from craft builders.³³ Then Tom Wolfe's³⁴ post-modern pamphlet *From Bauhaus to our House* struck a demagogic blow which hit the heart of the reservations when he attacked the "Silver Prince" and his disciples: "Worker housing, as developed by a handful of architects, inside the compounds, amid the rubble of Europe in the early 1920s, was now pitched up high and wide, in the form of Ivy League art-gallery annexes, museums for art patrons, apartments for the rich, corporate headquarters, city halls, country estates. It was made to serve every purpose, except housing for workers." In the Dessau period the trade mobilized against the Bauhaus beyond the local area with the slogan "defence against the hyperbole of the new building style." The slogan was printed in lower-case type by the counter-propagandists as well – as in the struggle with the Dessauer Volksblatt – as an ironic stylistic device for denunciation.

The Werkbund and the Bauhaus had espoused the cause of reconciling arts and crafts. The result of a historical process that they could not have foreseen was the opposite. As they de-



clined, the crafts middle classes were highly susceptible to Nazi propaganda. Flight into a defensive ideology against trade unions and "big business", which endangered jobs by imposing an increasing amount of technology,³⁵ was the form taken by middle-class machine-wrecking at the time. The Bauhaus had pushed through the right idea at the wrong time. Finally, in about 1950 the reconciliation between architecture and crafts that had been striven for in such a visionary fashion took place under new and quite different conditions, of a more neo-restorative kind, for which the Bauhaus was again politicized as a metaphor.

The combination of state educational institution and commercial business was a crucial result of the programmes of the arts-and-crafts movement and the Werkbund. But in the political context it was doubly risky:

The greater the economic crisis, the more the Bauhaus strove to be self-sufficient. In November 1925 a sales organization called "Bauhaus GmbH" was set up, but its profits did not meet expectations.

The consequence was increasing pressure from the right-leaning authorities, from 1924 the Thuringian Audit Chamber and the petty city council majorities in Dessau. This played material about a mixture of art and commerce into the hands of political opponents. Naturally the Bauhaus artists were not always able to co-ordinate

The Bauhaus Dessau teaching staff, photograph by Walter Gropius using a delay timer in 1926 on the roof of the studio building. From left to right: J. Albers (not in picture), H. Scheper, G. Muche, L. Moholy-Nagy, H. Bayer, J. Schmidt, W. Gropius, M. Breuer, W. Kandinsky, P. Klee, L. Feininger, G. Stölzl, O. Schlemmer.

functions neatly and to account for them properly. Bookkeeping turned out to leave a certain amount of room for doubt. Audit offices are structurally merciless. In 1933 the Reich audit office even objected to payment from state funds for certain regular invitations issued by Hitler, and reference was made to his royalties from *Mein Kampf*.

Even in normal, crisis-free times the most difficult conflicts were conflicts within the in-group. Gropius's skilfully staged declarations of unity among the masters with reference to this double concept concealed increasing group tensions. The artists in particular felt alienated. Fears about status shifted from the outside world to the inside world of the Bauhaus. Arts that were not affected by the principle of technical reproducibility found that their significance diminished and suffered from loss of the cult of uniqueness.³⁶ More conventional artists at the Bauhaus, like Gerhard Marcks, issued warnings as early as 1924 against changing into a production company, "otherwise the Bauhaus will be the 101st factory of the 100 that already exist". Hannes Meyer saw some of the painters starting to fear for their status, as they felt

themselves "forced to the wall by the scientifically -based design method".³⁷

Building up the commercial side at the expense of the teaching institution was accompanied by an increasing emphasis on technology, embodied by Moholy with his support for photography – to the regret of Feininger, who had heard Klee reproaching Moholy for a stereotypical cast of mind.³⁸ Kandinsky had thought that Moholy would reinforce his position, but the harmony of the early days did not persist, as Moholy wanted to eliminate everything that stood in the way of clarity, and Kandinsky's pictures reminded him of a blurred "under-water world".³⁹ The majority of the students were not in favour of Moholy's form of avant-garde either. Paul Citroën, a student at the Bauhaus, remembers: "None of us who suggested Moholy liked his form of Constructivism. This 'Russian trend', which came into being outside the Bauhaus, with its precise and ostensibly technical forms was repugnant to us, as we inclined towards the extremes of German Expressionism."⁴⁰

The Bauhaus had started as a fraternally conceived, ideologically charged primary



group, and founded on the rationalist demands of a competitive company, which were alien to art. The programme had been libertarian and socialist, but it was also intended to prove itself as a capitalist institution and business – which meant squaring the circle. As director Gropius suffered most of all from a linking of incompatible roles. When the SPD reproached him with making money from the Törten project he revealed how much of his director's salary he ploughed into the running of the business. His architect's office did not bring much in, but required input. None of the joint projects with housing co-operatives, e.g. AHAG Berlin, was realized. Expansion of the commercial business meant that Gropius had to travel a great deal. Mayor Hesse, who was able to grant the Bauhaus increasingly less money, was unable to contact him when the students started to threaten political action again. These irritations helped Gropius to make up his mind to leave. Hesse did not mention his conflicts with Gropius in his memoirs, who tended to be transfigured in retrospect. As a Marxist conflict theorist Hannes Meyer had a clearer instinct for the inevitable conflicts with the town that were programmed into the development of a commercial business: "That would have meant that the Bauhaus slipped through their fingers as a disputed power-object for the local parties."⁴¹

The Bauhaus suffered from conflicts between the individualism of brilliant artists who wanted to devote themselves entirely to their art, and being forcibly politicized by a programme that was seen as a political torch. Even left-wing authors⁴² tended to recommend "distanced exclusivity" to the Bauhaus in retrospect. The individual artist's distance from politics – with the exception of Hannes Meyer, when he had blossomed into recognizability – was bound to keep colliding with the role of the Bauhaus in the political field. Gropius – and even Hannes Meyer – forbade political activity in the Bauhaus, but had they not invited it from the students by their radical and practice-oriented programme? It was only Mies who undertook the disconnection of art from politics, but he was too late. For Hannes Meyer, this was a negative move back to the school as a mere place of learning.

Exclusion from the in-group under pressure from politically hostile surroundings

Alternation between exclusion and inclusion alters an in-group. Exclusion by the politicized environment in society sets exclusion processes within the group in motion.

Despite all the attacks from outside there was continuing unity in terms of cosmopolitan convictions. After denunciations, the Weimar Ministry of Culture stated in an investigation: "It would indeed also be strange if 17 Jews – all the other students are of Aryan origin – were able to tyrannize 200 other students." The artists were also attacked as Jews on many occasions. Carl Hofer once remarked in a letter to a Nazi functionary in 1933 that with the exception of the army there was no profession with so few Jews in it as art.⁴³ The group maintained its solidarity in terms of discrimination against foreigners. When Kandinsky of all people, as a refugee from Soviet Russia, was made out to be a "Bolshevik" – the corruption of the name to "Ideotinsky" quickly suggested itself – it was not difficult to defend the colleague. In research the thesis was plausibly put forward that the internationalism of the progressive architects could be interpreted as a reaction to the nationalistic degeneration of the Werkbund.⁴⁴ This applies to the social aspects of art production as well as stylistic development.

The in-group circle of friends, based on trust and esteem of a broad range of achievements, as a result of the conflicts described above, rooted in the Bauhaus's response to politicized surroundings, answered the pressure partly by retreating and partly by tending to rebel. Escapism and rebellion – known since Robert Merton's research as two forms of individual behaviour adaptation to challenges by the system – could go hand in hand here. Several patterns can be seen even in the Weimar period, but showing them would go beyond the scope of this book.

In the disintegration phase the development of factions in the Bauhaus led to the end of the old anti-hierarchical consensus. When Gropius resigned there was further applause for the pi-

The "Junge Bühne am Bauhaus" performing their sketch "Drei gegen eins" (Three against One), photograph by Marianne Brandt, 1929. The group rejected Oskar Schlemmer's theatre programme and followed the example of left-wing agit-prop theatre groups.



Hannes Meyer in Dessau, c. 1930.



97

lot leaving the ship, but the mood was so agitated that many of those left responded to his step as a withdrawal of love by the super-father. Ise Gropius remembered that even Moholy spoke up for Meyer to defuse the situation, even though he couldn't stand him and left the Bauhaus with Gropius.⁴⁵ Marcel Breuer gave notice as well; he did not part company with Gropius until they first had a joint architectural office in America, because he was fed up with being the great Gropius's henchman.⁴⁶

Gropius presented the conflicts in retrospect in such a way as to suggest that he had been disappointed by Meyer. But he cannot have been completely unaware of Meyer's critical attitude to the Bauhaus. Even before Meyer took up his post in 1927 Schlemmer remarked in a letter to Otto Meyer: "So Hannes Meyer is here ... He has been very critical about a number of things at the Bauhaus. Remarks like 'super-arts-and-crafts', 'Dornach', 'decorative aesthetics' were made objectively and candidly, and were accurate to an extent."⁴⁷ Meyer's opinions of his colleagues, which Schlemmer repeated, were almost all withering. Kandinsky came out of it best because of his theories. Nevertheless Schlemmer summed up like this: "Gropius should be pleased to have got this honest fellow as a new flower in his buttonhole."

Gropius had no quarrel with Hannes Meyer until Meyer dropped his political guard and admitted to being a Marxist. There were increasing differences of opinion with Klee and Kandinsky, particularly when in 1928 Meyer declared building to be a "biological" process, which was not aesthetic in character. Until the early fifties, "biological" and "organic" often stood for a new overall approach in architecture, intended to resist technical damage by civilization. Even Moholy-Nagy liked to use this vocabulary; many of his colleagues saw him as the epitome of technical and Constructivist tendencies, who provided a new interpretation of the class struggle, which supposedly did not rail against the means of production, but in favour of "healthy living and redeeming use of strength." The means to this end were "consistent observation ... of organic and biologically determined functions", which also included science and politics.⁴⁸ But these organically inclined word-capsules did not conceal the fact that, in the cases of both Moholy and Meyer, two conceptions of Modernism that were violently opposed to each other were clashing here; they were later to develop apart as formalism and realism. But the two brothers, later to be hostile to each other were at first entirely friendly and of the same mind, at least in their use of vocab-

Communist Bauhaus students in their campaign car appealing for participation in an anti-war demonstration in Dessau.
Farewell on Dessau station to students expelled from the school on the occasion of Hannes Meyer's dismissal, 1930.

98



ulary arising from the prevailing circumstances. There was a much greater contrast between the two of them and the intellectual and theoretical superstructure developed by Kandinsky, or Klee, the introverted "conscience of the Bauhaus". Both the latter found the technically inclined as well as the politicized variant of Constructivism alien. Kandinsky had admitted as early as 1919: "He rejects any proposition of an absolute formal solution and asserts that the question of construction always has a relative value: but every work has its absolute, physical effect." But for Moholy the question of "construction" increasingly acquired "absolute value". Kandinsky contrasted abstract artists with the Constructivists: "These artists are mechanics, if the truth be told ... but they produce mechanisms that do not move."⁴⁹ Admittedly this credo did not prevent him from accepting the post of deputy director under Meyer. He had anyway had a sense of injustice when it seemed that there was no question of a painter as a successor to Gropius; he was suspected by the right wing of being a Bolshevik, and at the same time felt that Meyer and the Communists discriminated against him.

Hannes Meyer did not promise any radical change in his inaugural address to the students' representatives. But he did suggest it between the lines: "Do we want to be guided by the requirements of the world around us, do we want to help in the shaping of new forms of life, or do we want to be an island which (promotes the development of the individual) but whose positive productivity, (on the other hand) is questionable?"⁵⁰ He saw the formation of factions in the Bauhaus as stemming from this contrast. He had a somewhat un-Marxist notion for getting over it: "Psychology is everything", as though political and conceptual concepts could be removed with a bit of goodwill. The view on Hannes Meyer in a letter by Schlemmer was very different from the one expressed even a year before: "Hannes is a disappointment ... looking for moves of a socio-political nature, which does not suit me ... I say that he should insist that Klee acts like Georg Grosz."⁵¹

Fundamentally Hannes Meyer was right to see his change of direction, which was

seen as politicization, simply as putting the Bauhaus's earlier pompous-sounding aspirations into practice. But under Gropius it was often still possible to integrate the group because there was scope and room to play for the subjective qualities of individual geniuses. Anni, the widow of Josef Albers, said retrospectively at a ripe old age: "we were a subordinated crowd" and "we didn't really know what we wanted."⁵² The Bauhaus legend was inclined to take Gropius's functionalist approach literally in view of the inner organization. In retrospect it is easier to get over the organizational failures than the losses in terms of created art, some of which fell victim to Nazi vandalism, and some of which was never created due to turbulent hold-ups.

Part of the politicization was – as happened again in 1968 – imposed on the teachers by the students. Accounts by students at the time show that politicization continued even under a "reactionary" director like Mies, and that confrontation between the parties also continued to increase after Meyer.⁵³ As in 1968 "sociological matters" became the latest thing in the college. The artists felt increasingly marginalized. Schlemmer went to Breslau and Klee to Düsseldorf, despite Meyer's dismissal in 1930. The Bauhaus started to be politicized, even though communists made up scarcely ten per cent of the student body. Under pressure from the city, Meyer forbade communist cell work, but encouraged dissemination of the ideology by proclaiming himself to be an academic Marxist. In July 1930, after a trip to Switzerland, mayor Hesse forced Hannes Meyer to resign. With the exception of Gunta Stölzl all the Bauhaus masters took the side of Meyer's opponents. Gropius admitted that he had made a mistake and advised the mayor. Hesse also felt that he has been let down in retrospect. On the subject of "Expulsion from the Bauhaus", Meyer wrote that he had "never been a member of any political party" and that his "activities had always been concerned with cultural policies" and he was not credible when he was carried away by his anger to the extent of resorting to invective: "You flirt with your culturally bolshevistic Institute, yet simultaneously you forbid its members to be Marxists." Neither Hesse nor

Gropius replied; Hesse did not feel attacked personally, as it had been acknowledged that he had acted honourably.⁵⁴ A response by a Swiss Bauhaus student, Alexander Schawinsky, was not printed and only came to public attention in *Bauwelt* in 1977: Hannes Meyer was interpreted as being neurotic about his image and unable to bear the shadow of Gropius. His lack of consistency was stressed more heavily than in many subsequent undermining and conspiracy theories, and this seemed close to reality: "he wanted to seem to be a communist martyr and yet he didn't lift a finger for communism. he proclaimed unconditional collectivism and claimed all the credit himself ... he laughed at formalism, that poor, much-thrashed little horse, but his own formalist attitude degenerated into a biological aesthetic. in brief, he did not let his right hand know what his left hand was doing."⁵⁵ The political conflict between formalism and realism, which also came to light here, came into being in the later stages of the Weimar Republic, and was expressed in territorial terms in the two German states after 1945. The GDR later built up the legend of Hannes Meyer the great hero of the class struggle,⁵⁶ while Gropius and others started to wonder whether Meyer hadn't actually overestimated himself as an architect, because he had designed all his key works (ADGB school Bernau, Petersschule in Basel, competition design for the League of Nations building in Geneva) with Hans Wittwer, who was now seen as the more creative one of the two. A GDR writer felt that it was simply unjust of Gropius to require reticence even in view of the world economic crisis: "The situation had become so intense that stronger and more honest decisions were required."⁵⁷

Hannes Meyer had been established as a scapegoat for the ruin of the Bauhaus. Transfiguring the Bauhaus as the symbol of the other, "good Germany" meant that there was a danger of reducing destructive tendencies inherent in programme development, personal politics and the internal leadership of the establishment or to reduce these tendencies to "communist intrigues". But on the other hand, the seeds of self-destruction should not be unduly dramatized. Artists' communities



clearly have a temporary quality built into them. The alternative would have been to allow the Bauhaus to be one art college among others. Its early death deserved transfiguration and allowed people to overlook this situation. The common goal cannot be kept alive by running an institution, only by a living community – but all artists' life communes have collapsed, although from Barbizon to Worpswede there seems to have been a permanent anti-academic summer holiday. These communities broke down because of internal conflicts, even though they did not have to cope with either a teaching or a commercial operation. There was occasional politicization. Parallels can be drawn between Heinrich Vogeler in Worpswede and Hannes Meyer. But Jean-François Miller and Paula Modersohn-Becker were able to avoid unreasonable demands for politicization by escapism.

The historical attempt to reunite all areas of life through art was condemned to failure from the start when seen in the light of new system theories, just like the later polytechnic teaching that led to the rehabilitation of the Bauhaus, seen as "formalistic" at first, in the GDR. In retrospect Hannes Meyer praised his era for its "social mission", the promotion of the exact sciences in his curriculum, the cutback of painting, and reproached the Mies era with rejecting polytechnic education and going back to being a school dedicated merely to instruction.⁵⁸ For pioneering tech-

nology enthusiasts, like Moholy, it was precisely this application-oriented enthusiasm for technology that represented trivialization. Two concepts of technology started to grow apart. As Stalinist cultural politics developed, the extreme left distanced themselves from Constructivist tendencies. In the last days of the Weimar Republic Moholy saw Nationalists and Socialists come to blows in the Kroll Opera House in Berlin; but they all agreed about Moholy's set design: "Here the outcry against 'intellectual decadence' and 'technological mania'" had brought together "all shades, from the carmine red of the Social Democrats to the black-white-red of the Nationalists".⁵⁹ An unholy alliance of Nazis and Communists, which had taken place in many strikes, was occasionally demonstrated in art as well. Moholy was abused by someone who worked for the Rote Fahne: "It is you and your kind who have betrayed revolutionary art ... with your decadence ... you have destroyed the trust of the masses in artists and writers."⁶⁰ A coalition between Bauhaus, big business and Hindenburg was insinuated in this very invective.

The intended unity of art, technology and life first foundered on a society that was becoming increasingly differentiated and later on a development in politics which removed this differentiation in a civil-war style polarization. The Bauhaus had pointed the way forward by renouncing auratic art, but later served in legend as an aura for the transfiguration of a Modernism interpreted much too monolithically.

After the Second World War the COBRA group made a feeble attempt to combine artistic and political aims, but only in a loose network. The student movement was the last attempt to remove differentiation from life's various fields. It failed. From then onwards the independence of life-fields has been accepted, without a *l'art pour l'art* attitude. As was the case with the Bauhaus artists, it is recognized as a painful aspect of this development in the relationship between art and society that the devil "politics" was driven out at the price of infiltration by the Beelzebub "commerce".

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- 3 Isaacs, op. cit. note 2, p. 802.
- 4 Eberhard Steneberg, *Arbeitsrat für Kunst*, Berlin 1918–1921, Düsseldorf 1987, p. 29.
- 5 Hans M. Wingler quotes Walter Gropius, in: *The Bauhaus. Weimar, Dessau, Berlin, Chicago*, Cambridge/Mass. 1986, 7th ed., p. 31.
- 6 Oskar Schlemmer, *Briefe und Tagebücher*, Stuttgart 1977, p. 91.
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- 20 op. cit. note 6, p. 211.
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- 24 Isaacs, op. cit. note 2, vol. 1, pp. 427, 429.
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- 27 Letter to Eugen Hönig, 18.1.1934, quoted in: Isaacs, op. cit. note 2, vol. 2, p. 645.
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- 31 Diether Schmidt (ed.), *Manifeste, Manifeste 1905–1933. Schriften deutscher Künstler des 20. Jahrhunderts*, Dresden 1965, vol. 1, p. 291.
- 32 Isaacs, op. cit. note 2, vol. 1, p. 244. Claude Schnaidt, *Hannes Mayer. Bauten, Projekte und Schriften*, Stuttgart 1965, p. 112.
- 33 op. cit. note 29, p. 161.
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- 35 Isaacs, op. cit. note 2, vol. 2, 1986, p. 858.
- 36 Karl Dietrich Bracher, *Die Auflösung der Weimarer Republik*, Villingen 1960, 3rd ed., p. 161; Norbert Huse, op. cit. note 21, p. 124.
- 37 Kröll, op. cit. note 1, p. 71.
- 38 Martina Rudloff (ed.), *Gerhard Marcks. Retrospektive*, Munich 1989, p. 60; Schnaidt, op. cit. note 32, p. 112.
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- 51 op. cit. note 6, p. 111.
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- 57 Schnaidt, op. cit. note 32, p. 17 f.; Karl-Heinz Hüter, *Bauhaus contra Bauhaus*, *Deutsche Architektur* 1966, issue 1, pp. 54–57.
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Marie Neumüllers
“... our own space around us”
Life in the Bauhaus¹



Moise Verobeitschik, Max Bill, Heinz Allner and Albert Mentzel (and an unknown student in front) doing balancing practice on the roof of the studio building, photograph by Naftaly Rubinstein, 1928.

When the members of the Bauhaus left their provisional teaching accommodation in Mauerstraße in Dessau and other places in the town and moved into the Bauhaus building, which was still not quite complete, in what was then Friedrichsallee in autumn 1926, a rich and varied life started to develop there. The "Weißes Fest" (White Feast) in spring 1926, even before the building was finished, the "Schlagwörterfest" (Catchword Feast) in 1927, the "Bart-Nasen-Herzens-Fest" (Beard-Nose-Heart Feast) in 1929 and the "Metallisches Fest" (Metallic Feast) in 1929 were carefully-staged major events.² In between these celebrations, to which large numbers of outsiders were invited, there were smaller events to mark birthdays, farewells, etc., which were just as lovingly designed – whether they took place in the hall, the workshop wing or one of the studios. And the Bauhaus was also regularly used for lectures and cultural events, which brought a breath of the wider world into Dessau, which many Bauhaus members found rather provincial.³ But everyday life in the new building soon became very busy, fuelled by the Bauhaus members' artistic drive and also by the urge to have a good time after demanding teaching or work in the studios. Casual meetings often turned into spontaneous parties – and this also happened when and precisely because the Bauhaus had once more been shaken by one of its constantly recurring internal or external crises. The diaries and letters of first generation Bauhaus members in particular provide surprising insights into this everyday life. Later memories⁴ often lose their authenticity through distance in time, but they help to round off the overall picture. Because of the Bauhaus members' attitude to photography as a medium⁵ the photographic records are dominated by studies of architecture, light and movement, with spontaneous photographs and snapshots in the minority. The will to design persists even when recording everyday life.

Bringing together a large number of artistic individuals, the creative element in the Bauhaus, certainly had its disadvantages as well. As early as June 1925, when people were just starting to become familiar with conditions in Dessau,

Invitation to the "Weißes Fest", 1926, designed by Herbert Bayer. Invitation to the "Metallisches Fest", 1929, the last major event staged at the Bauhaus. Designed by Johann Niegemann. Party in student Ljuba Monastirskaja's studio, photograph by Edmund Collein, c. 1931.



Ise Gropius noted in her diary: "... spending a whole day with Bauhaus people gets on your nerves, and if you don't remind yourself that this eternal seething boiler has its good side and prevents any kind of stagnation, you could sometimes lose heart when faced with this constant discontent and touchiness."⁶ Quarrels, gossip and tittle-tattle are bound to occur in a community that lives in relatively cramped conditions and, despite efforts on both sides, largely in isolation from the town of Dessau. Petty jealousy and living out personal ambitions were part of everyday life. Thus when the masters' houses were being built there was constant conflict between Gropius, who had very clear ideas about the design of the houses, and the masters' wives, who often bombarded the architect with their personal requests. Ise Gropius was often called upon to smooth things out, supporting her husband uncompromisingly. When the ground plans for the masters houses were completed she wrote, amused: "All the Bauhaus women are now playing a game called 'Die Frau als Schöpferin' (The Creative Wife, title of a book by Bruno Taut)",⁷ but Gropius carried his concept through unwaveringly, paying no attention to the many requests that were put to him. These relatively harmless conflicts were joined by a feeling of neglect on the part of the young masters, who had to make do with studios in the Prellerhaus.⁸ Gropius was also constantly in conflict with the masters, by whom he increasingly felt inadequately supported. After Hannes Meyer was appointed to the Bauhaus in 1927, and it soon became clear what a leading role Gropius had in mind for him, additional rivalries arose between old hands and the Swiss, with his quite different conceptual approach.⁹

Despite constantly recurring conflicts and a very ambivalent attitude to the town of Dessau, the students in particular found their lives much improved by moving in to the new buildings. The studio wing, a section of the Bauhaus whose completion long seemed under threat for financial reasons, acquired a key role for life in the Bauhaus shortly after it was completed. Thus Xanti Schawinsky called the Prellerhaus (the unofficial name for the studio building, taken over from the Studio

Bauhaus members on the balconies and terraces of the studio building.
Front left: Anni Albers, Gunta Stölzl, April 1927.



building in Weimar, named after the painter Friedrich Preller) a "symbol ... for the fulfilment of modern living requirements".¹⁰ Schawinsky, who was at the Bauhaus from 1924 to 1928 and worked in the stage workshop in particular, and also belonged to the "Fun Department"¹¹ as a member of the Bauhaus band, was enthusiastic about the comforts of the studio building, from the communal facilities like baths and showers, small kitchens and terraces down to the furnishing of the individual studios with built-in cupboards, sofa niches, washing facilities and – largely designed by Marcel Breuer – tubular steel furniture. The 28 studios, whose monthly rental was 20 Reichsmark including cleaning and gas, were much sought-after by the students. Not even employees had established rights in all cases. Marianne Brandt, a talented student in the metalwork department, and its temporary director after Moholy-Nagy's departure from the Bauhaus in 1928, wrote after Easter 1929, when



she was still in charge of the workshop: "... I live in the studio building, and hope that I will be able to stay here at least until October ..."¹² The studios were re-allotted term by term by the masters' council, with four to five weeks before they could be taken over as a rule.¹³ Life in the studios was to be regulated by strict house-rules, which had to be signed by the tenants when they took over the keys in the Bauhaus secretaries' office. Under "General" it said: "the building is there for working undisturbed. residents are required to be quiet and orderly. close doors quietly. no music from 11 p.m. to 7 a.m. no use of the washing facilities in the toilets. keep the kitchens clean ..."¹⁴ The masters' council presumably made regulations of this kind to minimize the offence caused by the Bauhaus and its members in Dessau. At the same time the mayor of Dessau, whose relationship with the Bauhaus was constantly clouded by petty details, regularly made mountains out of molehills of this kind.

Andor Weininger, a key member of the Bauhaus band, wrote that in the transitional period in particular people behaved in a more civilized and less extravagant way than in Weimar.¹⁵ In fact the students remained untouched by all these regulations, and used the building according to their own ideas. Marianne Brandt remembers: "When Gropius decided to have a look at his work, the Dessau Bauhaus, into which the students and staff had just moved, he got quite a shock when he realized that his Bauhaus people were using the flat roof and the studio façade for balancing exercises and climbing up the façade."¹⁶ Brandt also stressed the social function of the little balconies in the Prellerhaus as places for conversation. Schawinsky described the studio building in a similar way: "the individual balconies turned out to be ideal communication stations; it was possible to make contact with neighbours there, by calling out, without having to seek each other out. when albers wanted to entertain people with his latest joke, all he needed to do was call out the names of the people on the floor – lajko, herbert, xanti (breuer, bay-er, schawinsky) – and they 'met' on the little balconies. it was also possible to look into other people's studios from there, through the large glass walls, unless the curtains happened to be drawn. 'transparency' was part of everyday life, and became an entirely positive experience."¹⁷ It is very clear from this how architecture and actual life influenced each other, entirely in the spirit of Gropius's credo "architecture means designing the life-processes"¹⁸ and the way in which the students appreciated the relationship between programme and products on the one hand and individual life-styles on the other. Lou Scheper, who worked in the Bauhaus's mural painting workshop with her husband Hinnerk, came to the same conclusion on the subject of the move from Weimar to Dessau: "Now in Dessau we had spacious workshops in our own building; and we developed a spirit for the building that was not necessarily identical with that of the Weimar Bauhaus. We now had our own space around us: in this way our idea of space developed and architecture became reality. The playful improvisations at our celebrations – like Schlemmer's scenic experi-

How many people will a balcony hold?

Bauhaus members on a balcony in the studio building, after 1925.
Sometimes teaching took place outside in good weather: Alcar Rudelt with students,
photograph by Irena Blühova, c. 1931.



ments and games with figures – were now played out on a new stage that could be opened up on two sides. The studio building with its open balconies became the scene of lively musical and masked performances. Life broke out on all sides in strong tones and colours.”¹⁹ As well as planned and staged “performances” in the studio building, to which Lou Scheper is referring here, people also met quite spontaneously on the balconies: “anyone who wanted to share a new gramophone record put his gramophone on the balcony in the evening. that was a signal for return performances – it could easily turn into a musical evening.”²⁰ Cultural exchange in other spheres was also lively: “the balconies were just large enough for a meal for three. there was a lively exchange of national recipes from a whole variety of homes in the kitchens on each floor – hungarian, polish, german, swiss, russian, jewish, oriental, japanese, hindu, italian. of all the recipes the most popular was onions fried in butter with eggs, probably because it was simple and economical.”²¹ It is clear from this description of everyday life in the Prellerhaus how close enjoying life and financial problems were to each other in the Bauhaus – it was not just the institution itself that had to struggle with this problem, but the students as well. It should also be recognized that the students did not just like the building as a pleasant place in which to live, but they were also aware of its architectural importance: “in contrast with the weimar preller-haus with its dark corridors, old-fashioned privies, lack of cooking and bathing facilities, the new studio building occupied an important place in the history of modern architecture, and it is entirely possible that the fresh spirit drew some of its impetus from the same source.”²² Andor Weininger also points out the importance of a “home” of their own for the Bauhaus community.²³ Even the later director of the weaving section, Gunta Stölzl, who had great difficulty in coming to terms with the Bauhaus’s move and the new location in Dessau, praised the Prellerhaus in a letter to her brother: “But now we have been sitting in our studios for some time and living there is very good clean light spacious and we even have a view – and so that almost adds up to a con-

tented! person but oh dear it only looks like that from the outside. At the heart of things there is much that is not right, not for me and not for the bauhaus.”²⁴

Even in an extraordinary institution like the Bauhaus daily life its not without its humbler moments. For example, the Prellerhaus canteen was a permanent bone of contention. Even before the building was occupied Ise Gropius was complaining about the Bauhaus members’ lack of commitment to practical necessities: “spoke to frau scheper and frau nonne-schmidt about the future equipment of the canteen. it is astonishing how little interest the bauhaus people show in working on these things with us. with the exception of these two women no one else has addressed these matters at all.”²⁵ Marcel Breuer had indeed designed the canteen furniture, but no one at all had in fact bothered about furnishing and equipping the kitchen. So Ise thought it was an enormous success when she acquired some funds for kitchenware a short time after this. A benefit event in November 1926 was intended to drum up further funds.²⁶ The management of the canteen was even the subject of a dispute between Gropius and Fritz Hesse, the mayor of Dessau, in late 1927. Hesse had issued a set of canteen orders that he caused to be hung in the Bauhaus canteen against the explicit wishes of the Bauhaus director; this led to student protests.²⁷ The students were also much involved in canteen problems at a later stage, and some of them helped out voluntarily. In 1931 a three-person canteen commission was formed, which worked for two terms and concluded its activities with a nine-page report to the masters’ council and the students’ representatives. Every detail was subjected to a rigorous examination, from the quality of the food via portion size, billing, prices, closing-time and hygiene in the kitchen area.²⁸

Financial problems always played an enormous part during the Dessau Bauhaus period, both for the institution and for the students and employees. The estimated building costs for the Bauhaus and the masters’ houses were exceeded, and additionally there were imprecisions in the settlement caused by Gropius’s colleagues Ernst

Unknown person in a chequered mask at the "Weißes Fest", 1926.



"The old stagers": the Bauhaus "Fun Department" with Hermann Koesele, Lux Feininger, Max Bill, Joost Schmidt, Roman Clemens, Alexander Schawinsky, photograph by Lux Feininger.

Neufert and Otto Meyer-Otten. Dessau's annual budget of 100,000 Reichsmark for running teaching expenses led to restrictions in workshop activity. The workshops' commercial success and co-operation with industry also failed to meet expectations. As early as the end of the summer term in 1926 Gropius suggested to the masters' council that all those on fixed salaries should waive ten per cent of their salaries to relieve the Bauhaus budget; this idea was clearly rejected by Paul Klee and Wassily Kandinsky in particular.²⁹

Despite material anxieties, pleasure was still taken in communal celebrations. Ise Gropius wrote about the Christmas party in 1926: "evening in the bauhaus. we and the hesses had provided some cakes etc., so that the people who had stayed behind did not have too lean a christmas. frau nonne had cooked for everyone and the atmosphere was perfect. it really seems as though the prellerhaus, now that it has come back to life could have recreated the proper bauhaus atmosphere."³⁰ Paul Klee and his wife were also at the Christmas party, but this certainly did not prevent Klee from protesting energetically about cuts to his budget in the new financial arguments that started early in 1927. The ultimate compromise was a short-term five per cent cut. This discussion was mirrored in a decision taken by the masters' council in November 1929. At the same time as confirmation of her appointment to the weaving section, weaver Otti Berger received the news: "as you have already been informed, the financial situation compels us to reduce the employees' salary to (the existence minimum of) rm. 50.-."³¹ Even on consideration of the fact that Otti Berger was only on half-post, it is not surprising that the employees protested about this ruling, as they must have been under the impression that they were having to shoulder the Bauhaus's structural problems and the constantly increasing difficulties with the town.

Reactions to certain incidents in the building recur in the programmes for the Dessau Bauhaus celebrations, which were at the same time high points in the outward representation of a special artistic attitude. Thus the "Schlagwörterfest" (Catchword Feast) ironized the countless internal

Otti Berger on the day the Bauhaus closed,
photograph by Gertrud Arndt, September 1932.



arguments that shaped everyday life in the Bauhaus; the programme of the "Metallisches Fest" (Metal Feast) included some allusions to changes associated with the change of director from Walter Gropius to Hannes Meyer. All these public celebrations were designed with great attention to detail – Oskar Schlemmer and his stage workshop were responsible for directing the polished programmes, and introduced numerous original ideas; almost all the Bauhaus workshops were involved in implementing them. But the special character of these public events arose from the fact that – at least in the early years – the Bauhaus members treated each other very much like a family, and everyone took part in these events to the best of his or her ability. Individual costumes were very important, as well as the decoration of the building. Thus Oskar Schlemmer wrote with some amusement about the "Bart-, Nasen- und Herzensfest" (Beard, Nose and Heart Feast) in 1928: "Even Kandinsky had put on a red Sudermann beard, Klee side-whiskers, Hannes Meyer a big nose."³² However, the Bauhaus members themselves were somewhat disappointed with the "Metallisches Fest", which attracted a great deal of attention and was much reported at the last major celebration at the Dessau Bauhaus: many of them thought that there was too much staging and too little life.³³

Under Hannes Meyer, the Bauhaus did not change only in terms of content. The unconventional, to an extent hedonistic lifestyle of the Weimar and early Dessau years gave way to considerably greater emphasis on political and social questions. The quality of guests from the outside also changed appropriately. And in these later years, material anxieties were rarely countered by spontaneous celebrations.

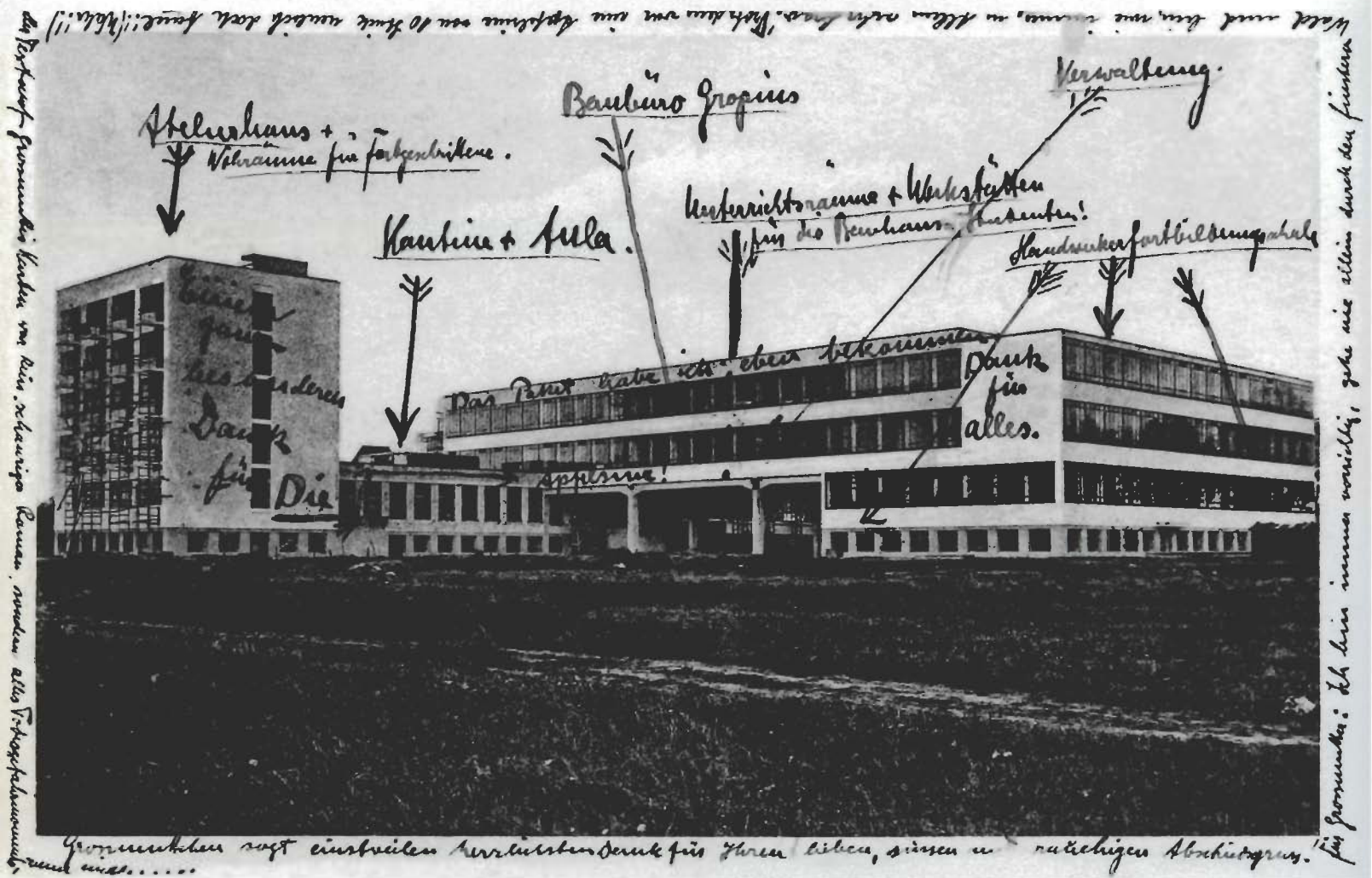
Weininger and Schawinsky, two leading members of the "Fun Department" left the Bauhaus in 1928, and Oskar Schlemmer, who as feast designer had provided ideas for numerous official and unofficial celebrations, responded to a call to Breslau in 1929. Heinrich Neuy, who started a course at the Bauhaus in 1930, wrote in retrospect: "Celebrations of previous years at the Bauhaus has attracted attention because of their particular

nature. But even in my time a great deal of this special character had been lost."³⁴ Hannes Meyer's directorial style, committed to a new rationality, directed at social questions, tending to separate rather than synthesize art and technology, was clearly not beneficial to that form of individual creativity that had made the Bauhaus feasts possible. Even Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, who was only in Dessau for three days a week in his time as Bauhaus director, was not able to unify the Bauhaus family again, especially as right at the beginning of his term of office the Prellerhaus seems to have been rebuilt, and the rooms partly converted as teaching spaces.³⁵ The fathers of the early years in Dessau were scattered all over the world; student life was much more a matter of political differences, demonstrations and strikes than common culture experiences and exploration.

The insidious loss of *joie de vivre*, celebration culture and community feeling was the harbinger of the end of the Dessau Bauhaus in 1932, which at the same time marked the end of the most creative and productive phase in the institution's short history.

- 1 Headline: Lou Scheper, Beim Betrachten neuer Bauhaus-Fotos, in: *Bauwelt* no. 43/44, 1968, p. 78.
- 2 For feast design at the Bauhaus cf. e.g. Adelheid Rasche, Oskar Schlemmer als Festgestalter, in: Oskar Schlemmer, *tanz theater bühne*, catalogue for the Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen exhibition, pub. by Bühnen Archiv Oskar Schlemmer, Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen et al. (eds.), Stuttgart 1994, pp. 31–39.
- 3 Lecturers at the Bauhaus included Erich Mendelsohn, Mart Stam, El Lissitzky and Hans Prinzhorn; highlights among the cultural events certainly included Gret Palucca's dance evenings or a visit by composer Béla Bartók.
- 4 E.g. in Eckhard Neumann (ed.), *Bauhaus und Bauhäusler, Erinnerungen und Bekenntnisse*, Cologne 1985; or Heinrich Neuy, *Bauhaus-Erinnerungen*, typescript 1990, Archiv der Sammlung, Stiftung Bauhaus Dessau.
- 5 For the role of photography at the Bauhaus cf. Fiedler, Jeannine (ed.), *Fotografie am Bauhaus*, Berlin 1990.
- 6 Ise Gropius, *Tagebuch 1924 bis 1928*, typescript, Bauhaus-Archiv Berlin, p. 61.
- 7 op. cit. note 6, p. 43.
- 8 Marcel Breuer designed, for himself, Josef Albers, Herbert Bayer, Adolf Mayer, Otto Meyer-Otten and Joost Schmidt, another housing estate intended to be immediately adjacent to the Bauhaus building, based on his ideas of serial production of very small buildings. This plan was never realized, however, for reasons of cost, among others.
- 9 Cf. e.g. Reginald R. Isaacs, Walter Gropius, *Der Mensch und sein Werk*, volume 1, Frankfurt am Main, Berlin, Vienna 1985, p. 403 ff.; or Gunta Stölzl, letters to her brother Erwin e.g. 5.12.1928 and 21.3.1929, Bauhaus-Archiv Berlin.
- 10 Alexander Schawinsky, *Autobiographie/Fragment*, typescript, Bauhaus-Archiv Berlin, p. 130.
- 11 Cf. Andreas Weininger, The "Fun Department" of the Bauhaus, in: *Mosaic*, November 1957, edited by the Architectural Society, School of Architecture, University of Toronto.
- 12 Marianne Brandt, letter to Marthe Bernson, undated, Bauhaus-Archiv Berlin.
- 13 Cf. e.g. the masters' council's agreement for a studio from 1.11.1928 to 31.3.1929 to student Otti Berger dated 25.9.1928, typescript, Bauhaus-Archiv Berlin.
- 14 House rules for the studio building, typescript, Bauhaus-Archiv Berlin.
- 15 Cf. Andreas Weininger, op. cit. note 11, p. 17.
- 16 Marianne Brandt, Brief an die junge Generation, in: Neumann, *Bauhaus und Bauhäusler*, op. cit. note 4, pp. 156–161, here p. 160.
- 17 Alexander Schawinsky, op. cit. note 10, p. 130.
- 18 Walter Gropius, geistige und technische voraussetzungen der neuen baukunst, in: *Die Umschau*, Frankfurt am Main, 31 (1927) 15; quoted from Probst/Schädlich (ed.), *Walter Gropius, Ausgewählte Schriften*, vol. 3, p. 114.
- 19 Lou Scheper, op. cit. note 1.
- 20 Alexander Schawinsky, op. cit. note 10, p. 130.
- 21 op. cit. note 10, p. 130.
- 22 op. cit. note 10, p. 131.
- 23 Andreas Weininger, The "Fun Department" of the Bauhaus, op. cit. note 11, p. 17.
- 24 Gunta Stölzl, letter to her brother Erwin dated 25.10.1926, Bauhaus-Archiv Berlin.
- 25 Ise Gropius, loc. cit., entry for 17.5.1926, p. 112.
- 26 Cf. Paul Klee, *Briefe an die Familie*, edited by Felix Klee, Cologne 1979, p. 1016.
- 27 Cf. Ise Gropius, op. cit. note 6, entry for 17.5.1926, p. 209.
- 28 J. J. and C. Vanderlinden, R. Krum, Bericht der Kantinenkommission, typescript, undated, Bauhaus-Archiv Berlin.
- 29 Cf. Walter Gropius, and Paul Klee, correspondence of September–October 1926 on the question of a salary reduction, in: Hans Maria Wingler, *The Bauhaus*. Weimar, Dessau, Berlin, Chicago. Cambridge/Mass., 7th printing 1986.
- 30 Ise Gropius, op. cit. note 6, entry for 21.12.1926.
- 31 Der Meisterrat des Bauhauses Dessau an Otti Berger, typescript, Bauhaus-Archiv Berlin.
- 32 Oskar Schlemmer, letter to Tut Schlemmer dated 22.2.1928. Quoted from: Andreas Hüneke, Oskar Schlemmer – Idealist der Form, *Briefe, Tagebücher, Schriften*, Leipzig 1989, p. 193 ff.
- 33 Cf. e.g. comments by Gunta Stölzl in letters to her brother.
- 34 Heinrich Neuy, op. cit. note 4, p. 10.
- 35 Cf. a letter from Gustav Hassenpflug to Otti Berger dated 22.10.1930, Bauhaus-Archiv Berlin.

“You must go there” - contemporary reactions



„It's a pity that this piece of work by G. is in such a little place and thus so little known."¹ This note in Ise Gropius's diary refers to the Fagus factory in Alfeld, not to the Bauhaus. In it she identifies a problems that Neues Bauen had to face in its early years: buildings went up in remote industrial areas or on the edge of large cities and were scarcely noticed in the centres, and thus they were slow to make their mark on the modernization process. This put a strain on the avant-gardists' sense of time – Ise Gropius again: "Film in the evening, American. This pace! This magic pace!" When in spring 1925 it was decided that the Bauhaus would move to Dessau and not to Frankfurt, Magdeburg or Mannheim, there was further scepticism: " ... moving to such a little town again ..."² But even so it is inspiring to be able to build at last.

Once Walter Gropius was established in his office on the outskirts of Dessau he was able to catch up with what he had not done in Weimar, and when the Bauhaus opened in November 1926 the surprised visitors were presented with a wide-ranging building programme that had already been realized to a large extent: "A complete complex of public buildings has emerged out of thin air, and together they make up the new Bauhaus. Four villas have been completed for the Bauhaus masters ... and at last, carried out systematically for the first time in Germany, a whole housing estate is being constructed using the so-called flow system."³ The Bauhaus building, the masters' houses, the Stahlhaus and the terraced houses on the estate in the Dessau district of Törten are an impressive demonstration of the Bauhaus's claim to a leading role in Neues Bauen.

Even the opening ceremony fears that what had been achieved in Dessau would not be noticed in other parts of Germany began to be allayed: over 1500 representatives of cultural life, politicians and industrialists, and also visitors from neighbouring countries including Holland, France, Switzerland and the Soviet Union came to look at the buildings. It is perhaps even more important in terms of the response to the Bauhaus buildings that the opening ceremony became a media event.

Photographs of the Bauhaus, mainly by Lucia Moholy and Erich Consemüller, but also from numerous picture agencies were published in newspaper supplements and magazines, thus disseminating images of a modern cultural centre that was to lure a constant stream of visitors to Dessau. Ise Gropius's diary entries gives us exhaustive information about interest in the Bauhaus buildings, which had not been anticipated on this scale:

6.5.1926: "on the site in the afternoon with schmetzer and 3 dutch people, friends of oud, an architect called van der vlugt with his client v. d. leeuw and an engineer who are travelling around germany to see our best industrial construction, as they want to build a big factory in holland for tobacco, tea and coffee ...

foreign visits are becoming more and more frequent: we could employ someone to show people round the buildings ...

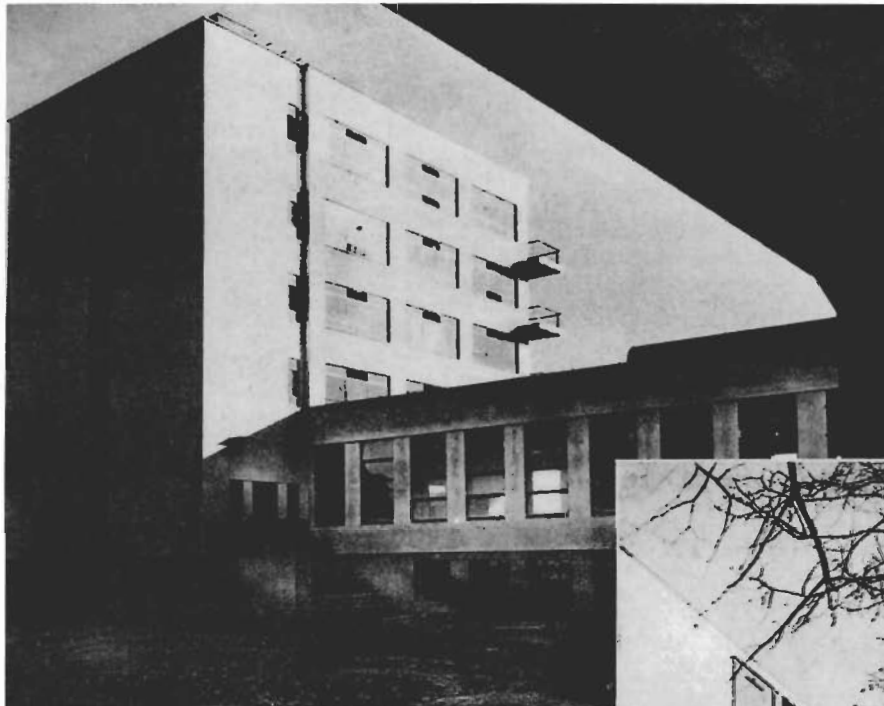
6.6.1926: visit from professor schröter of the plate glass association. very important occasion for us. he was visibly pleased with the building, and he even promised the plate glass for the bauhaus part of the new building, which had not yet been donated.

2.11.1926: we had the following visitors: taut bruno, taut max, mies v. d. rohe, häring, hilbers-eimer, schneck (stuttgart), döcker, lissitzky, dörner, v. pechmann (munich), kallai, the benschidts, frau lüders, redslob, g. lucas, frau lucas, mother, the burchards, ellen, various commissions etc.

26.11.1926: we are getting more and more enquiries from the papers, we can't print enough photographs. frau moholy has far too much to do and is working night and day to produce all the photographs ordered from her.

3.12.1926: press day. about 60 journalists and a few other interested parties ... many interested people here, above all from abroad. guévrékian and lurçat from paris, stam and boeken from holland, 2 architects from russia etc. there were far too many people for us to talk to all of them.

4.12.1926: opening day. enormous number of people, about 1500, in the bauhaus in the morning ... countless telegrams all day and countless letters and congratulations ...



DAS NEUE BAUHAUS IN DESSAU

Der Neubau des Bauhauses in Dessau wurde nach einjähriger Bauzeit jetzt fertiggestellt und ist bereits bezogen. Die ausserordentlich interessante und architektonisch sehr reizvolle Anlage wurde unter Leitung des Architekten Walter Gropius, des Direktors des Bauhauses, errichtet. Auffallend ist besonders die Heranziehung modernster Technik und die ausserordentlich reiche Verwendung von Spiegelglas über einem Gerippe von Eisenbeton.

Photo Lucia Moholy

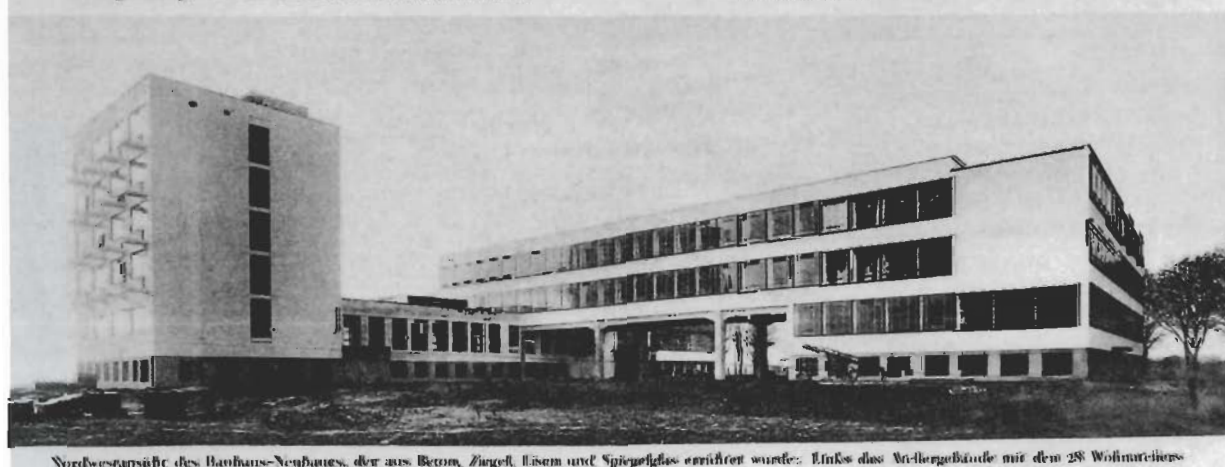
Ateliergebäude mit 28 Wohnateliern, Speisesaal, Küche, Wasch- und Badeanstalt



Das grossartige Glashaus mit den Laboratoriumswerkstätten



Das Haus mit dem Rohrkranen für die Fachschule



Nordwestansicht des Bauhaus-Neubaus, der aus Beton, Ziegel, Eisen und Spiegelglas errichtet wurde. Links das Ateliergebäude mit den 28 Wohnateliern

6.12.1926: the first good reviews in the press. astonishing interest and sympathy. gr. is quite amazed by all the success.

7.12.1926: additional visits from the press.

9.12.1926: whole organizations arrive to look at the accommodation and the bauhaus.

12.12.1926: over 700 people in the bauhaus again today; the students are talking themselves hoarse.

13.12.1926: took another 2 schools round, an arts-and-crafts school and a college.

14.12.1926: some architects from halle, where the bda (German Architects' Federation) are meeting, came over to look at everything here. häseler and berger from hamburg among them.

15.12.1926: the whole bda here.

23.12.1926: there seems to be no end to publications about the bauhaus. but this time there are some dissenting voices. gr. intends to write a review of the bauhaus himself, as no one has found the actual faults yet, but all sorts of incomprehensible remarks have been made about new constructions.

5.1.1927: visit from the mendelsohn's, m. very impressed ...

7.1.1927: no end to the guided tours.

9.1.1927: another guided tour for 20 people in the morning. and another 140 people took part in the general tours.

16.1.1927: over 200 visitors here in the bauhaus again.

21.1.1927: there are so many publications about the Bauhaus that I'm sure we must make good money out of it.

28.1.1927: scarcely a day passes without an important visit from abroad.

3.2.1927: reich standards institute in dessau. saw the bauhaus, the humboldt film and történ. great interest shown.

16.2.1927: 3 bankers visited from breslau, dresden etc. if only something would come of these constant visits!

21.12.1927: visit by director roth from the lauta factory, visiting the bauhaus on the recommendation of managing director v. d. porten. guided tour for the managing director of the harkort factory, düsseldorf in the afternoon.



1.3.1927: young bahlsen from hanover visited.

7.3.1927: lots of visitors because of the leipzig trade fair.

8.3.1927: visit by herr van der leeuw. he has been on a trip to america since his last visit here, to learn the latest and most up-to-date building methods.

7.4.1927: malevich and a herr peiper from warsaw visited.

1.6.1927: endless congresses in dessau. even in the town they're gradually noticing and starting to wonder why.

8.6.1927: director of the primus factory in berlin on a visit here to see the bauhaus with a mayor.

15.6.1927: women's conference in the bauhaus. 600 women from the country.

22.6.1927: guided tour of történ and the bauhaus for mayors and district administrative officers.

1.7.1927: bartning at the bauhaus to learn about flat roofs.

5.9.1927: berlage came to see us! he was determined to look at everything and seemed genuinely interested.

24.9.1926: visit from a group of young russian students and engineers sent to study in germany by the soviet government.

25.9.1927: many russian architects at the bauhaus. they are travelling round germany at state expense to study new building methods.⁴

3.10.1927: teige and krejzar here in dessau.

18.10.1927: some swedes visiting, wanting to study new building methods.



11.11.1927: an Italian architect called Pannaggi and a German actress with me. They had come here like the wise men to Bethlehem and actually found what they were expecting."⁵

From 1927 to 1930, according to the memoirs of Fritz Hesse, the mayor of Dessau, over 20,000 people visited the Bauhaus buildings in Dessau.⁶ No one expressed the astonishment, indeed admiration, that a first confrontation with the Bauhaus could evoke in people who saw it, more beautifully than the Soviet writer Ilya Ehrenburg – quoted in Karin Wilhelm's contribution. Like Ehrenburg, the English journalist Lilian T. Mowrer also found out about the cultural event in Dessau from the Berlin intelligentsia: "Modern Germany finds adequate artistic expression perhaps only in Dessau' my friends in the Romanisches Café assured me. 'You must go there to realize what this means.' And so I went to Dessau ... On the outskirts of the city is the Bauhaus, the school of Walter Gropius for architecture and allied arts, a large, flat-roofed building with lines as uncompromisingly straight as the pine trees which cast oblique

shadows upon it. Its acres of glass windows catch every ray of light and seem to mirror the water of the countless surrounding lakes; its white walls, straight black iron terraces are as sleek and free from ornament as a racing car. It might be a factory but for its exquisite proportions. No factory ever showed such delicate balance of line, such harmonious disposition of mass in space."⁷

At this "beautiful factory" visitors are first of all struck by the "laboratory workshops" as "probably (one) of the most extraordinary modern buildings to be seen in Germany ..."⁸ The building in which Gropius "addressed the problem of dissolving the wall by suspending a continuous glass skin in front of the supporting skeleton of the building with ultimate consistency"⁹ for the first time, is a significant step on the way to glass architecture whose borderless, light spaces come close to that "all-space" to which Gropius kept referring in his lectures in 1927. At night the light building becomes a construction that glows from the inside, as Nelly Schwalacher described it for the *Frankfurter Zeitung*.¹⁰ The asymmetry of the complex was

also seen as liberating. Alexander Dorner writes: "Here any sense of symmetry or order arbitrarily imposed from the outside has disappeared. Here on both the large and the small scale order emerges solely from the idea of function, which is served by the whole building and its parts. The inner organism and meaning of the building is the driving force that the building develops for itself, like a natural growth."¹¹ Again and again the cubic articulation and the reinforced concrete construction, which permitted free treatment of the wall areas from the horizontal and vertical bands of windows to the curtain wall, were celebrated as pioneering elements of Modern architecture. Adolf Behne, the leading critic of *Neues Bauen*, points out that a greater aim had been achieved, over and above mere use of the new building techniques and forms: "This new building for the Dessau Bauhaus expressed, strongly and purely, something that is certainly just as much behind all buildings using our Modern architecture, but that is usually vitiated by some inhibition, restriction or difficulty: the fact that a new type of human being and this human beings relations with the world is a starting-point and at the same time the finishing-point for the new building movement. New materials, new constructions, new techniques are important and have to be discussed, tried out and observed. But they are always just a means to an end, and the ultimate end is the human being."¹²

From reinforced concrete construction to the tubular steel chair, the Dessau Bauhaus showed its audience of experts pattern of industrial manufacture, hoping for financial support when developing models, and that they would then be taken into production. One of the first people to give financial support to the Bauhaus was the chairman of the Plate Glass Association, Direktor Schröter, who promised Gropius the expensive plate glass that he needed for the glass curtain in the workshop building. Bankers and industrialists sought information in Dessau about the Bauhaus programme as something that united art and technology, but without linking themselves more closely with the Bauhaus. Local politicians were also drawn to Dessau in great numbers, and the

North-West German Association of Municipal Building Departments held its conference in Dessau in 1927. Local building politicians and financiers could work alongside industry in issuing commissions, and make their contribution to the spread of modern building methods. But despite many contacts the Bauhaus did not receive any building commissions; one exception is that the Törten estate was financially supported by the standards committee of the Reich research association for economical practices in building and housing.

Walter Dexel identified the critical issue in 1928: the Bauhaus would not be sustainable as a laboratory for industry without industrial and state funding. Large modern estates were being built in Berlin, and a buildings factory had been set up in Frankfurt, but building in Dessau was stagnating after a promising start. Alongside constant hostility from the right wing, this was one of Gropius's main reasons for resigning from the post of Bauhaus director and moving his architectural practice to Berlin, where important building competitions were being announced.

Untouched by these signs of crisis, the Bauhaus buildings continued to attract the attention of the European avant-garde. Tadeusz Peiper and Kasimir Malevich travelled to Dessau from Poland and the Soviet Union. Peiper was the theoretician of the Polish avant-garde, and for him the Bauhaus had become the symbol of a new epoch: "If we need one more proof of the epoch-making value of the achievements of the new art, here it is. Iron, reinforced concrete and glass."¹³ The Czech artists that cultivated neighbourly relations with Dessau also saw the Bauhaus building as a landmark in modern culture. Karel Teige speaks of the Bauhaus and the Bauhaus building as a "head-quarters of modern design."¹⁴ Among Dutch architects, the Rotterdam practitioners who were committed to a rational building method were particularly interested in the Bauhaus. The Van Nelle factory in Rotterdam came into being at the same time, and Leendert C. van der Vlugt and his client Kees H. van der Leeuw visited the building in Dessau, which had similar construction character-



Title page of the magazine "Blätter für Alle", 1927.
Title page of the Czech magazine "RED", 1930.
Report on the Dessau Bauhaus in a Japanese publication.



ročník 3.
1930
Odeon
Praha



istics to the Rotterdam factory. Gropius returned the compliment by accepting van der Vlugt's invitation to lecture in Rotterdam and tried in vain to persuade Mart Stam, who was "principally responsible for the good façade of the van Nelle factory",¹⁵ to join the Bauhaus's architecture department. In France Christian Zervos wrote of the Bauhaus building: "For us this building is evidence of what a clever will can achieve. Unfortunately we do not have a mayor as courageous as the mayor of Dessau, or industrialists who are prepared to contribute to an achievement of this kind."¹⁶ Ivo Pannaggi, who himself studied under Mies van der Rohe and Ludwig Hilberseimer, reported in categories of rationalism as a style about the Bauhaus building, and soon buildings like the one in Dessau were grouped together in Italy as in the "stile tedesco", as a synonym for modern German architecture: "Gropius's rationalism often offers aesthetic concessions, as for example in the glass curtain of the workshop building, which, if assessed precisely, arises irrationally from an attempt to treat modern building methods and materials exclusively aesthetically."¹⁷ Pannaggi remarked on the material and the construction: "The building is in reinforced concrete with brick infill. All the frames are in the form of iron profiles and plate glass. The roof is flat. Rainwater is collected in cast-iron pipes and drains away inside the construction, thus avoiding external pipes and guttering, with the advantage that the temperature of the pipes can be adjusted to the temperature of the interior, thus preventing them from freezing in winter. The exterior is covered with a layer of cement and white rendering (Keim silicate paint). The laboratory block demonstrates a construction solution using reinforced concrete piers, set back to allow the realization of a continuous glass surface. As has been noted, this is more than a construction driven to extremes; it seems to be a legitimate attempt to apply new construction techniques, even though the principal purpose is aesthetic effect."¹⁸

American observers of the European avant-garde also had their eye on Dessau. Alfred Barr Jr. spent three days at the Bauhaus in 1927.

The impressions he gathered there encouraged him in his project for a Museum of Modern Art, not just for fine art, but for architecture, design and film as well. Inspired by Barr, Philip Johnson went to Dessau as well. He wrote effusively to his sister Louise about this "Mecca" of Modernism: "It is a magnificent building. I regard it as the most beautiful building we have ever seen, of the larger than house variety. Perhaps the Hook (Hoek van Holland with an estate by J.J.P. Oud) has what Hitchcock would call more lyric beauty, but the Bauhaus has beauty of PLAN, and great strength of design. It has a majesty and simplicity which are unequalled."¹⁹ A few years later Barr and Johnson played a leading role in the exodus of the Bauhaus members and the transformation of Neues Bauen into the International Style.²⁰ The Bauhaus building as an open-air stage for Schlemmer's figurines now serves as a title picture for the catalogue of the great Bauhaus exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art and at the same time as a visiting card for the German emigrants in intellectual America.

In Dessau itself, reactions to the Bauhaus building reflect the party conflict. A centre-left majority made up of the German Democratic and Social Democrat parties under the leadership of German-Democrat mayor Fritz Hesse had managed to secure finance for the Bauhaus against a right-wing block made up of the German-National Party, the German People's Party and householders. The leader of the Social Democrats, Heinrich Peus, could count on taking his party members with him in cases of conflict between the new and the old. The Social-Democrat reformer fought for the new school type with great commitment: "Just go into the Bauhaus! Is this not a building full of light, brightness and delight in colour? And then go into our old 'government shack' (hilarity and agreement), where the revolutionary government has a few holes made for a bit of light and air coming in. Nobody said a thing about that. And there is not a single one of all our schools in the past that can measure up to the Bauhaus (quite right). You have said that they will freeze in winter and not be able to stand the heat in summer. I've been there in winter several times

now. I was always pleased to get inside when it was cold outside because it's so nice and warm. And the ventilation in this building is so wonderful because of the way that the windows are constructed that it could not be more wonderful."²¹ Art historian Wilhelm van Kempen, who played a decisive part in bringing the Bauhaus to Dessau, tried to convince the citizens of his home town of the qualities of the new building: "There it stands before us, a mighty, powerful complex, a massive cube: large areas of wall, completely glazed on one side, large wall areas broken down into windows on the other side, and between them the bridge, and behind that a towering building, looking out calmly on its surroundings through broad windows. All this is unusual, the roof seems to be missing, the weight of the buildings seems to be modest, and the marked use of glass as a surface material does not appeal to everyone ... Just as mathematics is more than just empty formulae, just as there is an inner greatness concealed within these formulae, in the same way the functional buildings of our day, modest in the best sense of the word, have an inner secret, a soul. The magnificent glass wall of the workshop wing of the Bauhaus, in all its monumentally legitimate technology, in contrast with the lightness of the bridge – this is something that has to be felt, rather than just seen. And anyone who is still sceptical will only feel irresistibly convinced of the full beauty of this new building, made possible only with the aid of our new building technology, when the white cube shines out in the evening with light streaming out through all its windows."²²

Opponents of the Bauhaus also concentrated their attentions on the glass façade of the workshop building, where Gropius pushed forward to the "logical conclusion" of the modern building method. Berlin constructional engineer Konrad Nonn represented the right-wing Dessau parties as an expert witness. He took up superficial technical and constructional problems of modern building for his politically motivated general settling of accounts with the Bauhaus as an institution, and we can assume that this put paid from the outset to the necessary expert discussion

of building technology, which Gropius obviously wanted to happen: "In summer the glass wall is a surface that builds up heat, and in winter it is a cooling surface. The radiators and central heating pipes are fixed to the glass wall. The latter are probably also intended as a protective parapet for the slit in the floor, which is closed only with glass. Increased cooling in winter is already being estimated as causing a 10 per cent increase in fuel consumption." Nonn can see the space, coherent over three storeys, only from the point of view of "fire risks", and cast doubt on "the gigantic, freely suspended glass wall's resistance to wind pressure".²³ In 1933 Nonn removed the mantle of technical criticism, switching to the "mantle of artistic and aesthetic programmes" at the Bauhaus to rummage around in search of Bolshevik building activities at the Bauhaus, in the best Nazi fashion: "The group of Communist architects used the trick of spreading general Communist ideas under the mantle of artistic and aesthetic programmes, and to use the influence thus gained in a very particular way to bring the whole sphere of public building under Marxist influence, in other words, to destroy completely the element of small craftsmen and middle-sized operators, which is indispensable for the community – and they succeeded in doing this – and to replace it with industrialization and trusts, which also succeeded."²⁴ This was the kind of Nazi language that was used to campaign against the avant-garde before 1933 in traditional craft circles; for example, the Dessau craft associations warned against "the fact that the false roof construction used by the Bauhaus had almost completely paralysed the carpentry and roofing trade".²⁵ Rejection by the craft guilds, local architects and some of the local citizenry, who saw a threat to their own existence and also to the "German character" from the "dangers" of "domination by the mass human being" in the East and the "domination by machines and technology" in the West – according to engineer Emil Högg in a criticism of the Bauhaus²⁶ – brought the right-wing press to playing with the idea of pulling the Bauhaus down as early as 1929.²⁷ But attempts by the right-wing parties to achieve a majority on the

Dessau town council by a unity list and at least to close the Bauhaus, were foiled up to May 1932 by a thin majority of Democrats, Social Democrats and Communists, who supported the Bauhaus despite internal conflicts. It was only when two members of the town council were removed from office by the newly elected Nazi government in Sachsen-Anhalt that the right had a majority on the town council, which opened up the way to removing the Bauhaus. The last guided tour of the Bauhaus building was led by Ludwig Mies van

der Rohe. The visitor was the Fascist Staatsminister Freyberg, accompanied by his "expert", Paul Schultze-Naumburg. The tour passed "almost without a word being said", and as anticipated the "expert report" turned out to be "completely negative".²⁸ The *Anhalter Anzeiger* involuntarily confirmed the status of the Bauhaus in September 1933, when the Landesfrauen-Arbeitsschule moved into the building: "For some time now there have been thoughts of giving the school a modern building that is appropriate to the requirements of the times."²⁹

- 1 Ise Gropius, Tagebuch 1924 bis 1928, typescript, Bauhaus-Archiv Berlin.
- 2 op. cit. note 1.
- 3 Alexander Dorner, das bauhaus in dessau, newspaper supplement, no further details or date (1926), Bauhaus-Archiv Berlin, press cuttings 1924-1932.
- 4 Among the most prominent Russian visitors to the Bauhaus were El Lissitzky and Dsiga Werthoff, and also Anatoli Lunatsharski, the People's Commissar for Soviet Education. Arkadi Mordvinov visited the Bauhaus buildings with a group of Moscow architecture students in 1927. Mordvinov, who later achieved high rank in the the Soviet building world, made things a lot smoother for Hannes Meyer and his group when they were working in the Soviet Union. Cf. Konrad Püschel, Wege eines Bauhäuslers, Dessau 1997.
- 5 op. cit. note 1, pp. 130, 137, 141, 146-151, 153, 155-158, 160f, 164-168, 173, 180-182, 184f, 190f. The Volksblatt für Anhalt adds to the list of eminent visitors by naming the 55 associations and institutions that came to Dessau in 1927: Volksblatt für Anhalt, 27.6.1927.
- 6 Fritz Hesse, Von der Residenz zur Bauhausstadt, Bad Pyrmont 1963, p. 238.
- 7 Lilian T. Mowrer, Our Berlin Letter, in: Town and Country, 15.5.1928, Bauhaus-Archiv Berlin, press cuttings 1924-1932.
- 8 Max Deri, Das Bauhaus, in: BZ vom Mittag, Berlin, 7.12.1926, Bauhaus-Archiv Berlin, Gropius estate 23/243.
- 9 Walter Gropius, Bauhausbauten Dessau (1930), Reprint Mainz, Berlin 1974, p. 47.
- 10 Nelly Schwalcher, Das neue Bauhaus, in: Frankfurter Zeitung, evening edition, 31.10.1927, Bauhaus-Archiv Berlin, Gropius estate 23/370; cf. Lutz Schöbe's contribution to this book.
- 11 op. cit. note 3, press cuttings concerning the Bauhaus.
- 12 Adolf Behne, Das Bauhaus in Dessau, no place, no date, Bauhaus-Archiv Berlin, Gropius estate 23/9/140.
- 13 Tadeusz Peiper, Im Bauhaus, in: Der Mensch in den Dingen. Programmtexte und Gedichte der Krakauer Avantgarde, ed. by Heinrich Olschowsky, Leipzig 1986, p. 192.
- 14 Karel Teige, 10 Jahre Bauhaus, in: Volksblatt für Anhalt 1930, Bauhaus-Archiv Berlin, press cuttings from Dessau newspapers.
- 15 op. cit. note 1, p. 174.
- 16 Christian Zervos, Le "Bauhaus" de Dessau, in: Cahiers d'Art, issue 9, 1926, Bauhaus-Archiv Berlin, press 1926, file 2.
- 17 Ivo Pannaggi, Gropius e il Bauhaus, in: L. Ambrosiano, Milano, 8. Giugno 1932, Bauhaus-Archiv Berlin, press 1928 - Fascism.
- 18 op. cit. note 17.
- 19 Franz Schulze, Philip Johnson, Life and Work, New York 1994, pp. 54, 424.
- 20 Cf. Margret Kentgens-Craig, The Bauhaus and America, First contacts: 1919-1936, MIT Press, Cambridge/Mass. 1999.
- 21 Bauhaus und Hausbau. Kampf zweier Welten, in: Volksblatt für Anhalt, 25.11.1927, no. 276.
- 22 Wilhelm van Kampen, Die Einweihung des Bauhauses Dessau, in: Dessauer Zeitung, 4.12.1926.
- 23 Konrad Nonn, Zusammenfassendes über das Weimarer und Dessauer "Bauhaus", in: offprint from Zentralblatt der Bauverwaltung, no. 10, 1927, p.105. Konrad Nonn, who was a co-founder of the Kampfbund für deutsche Kultur, was appointed as an expert witness by an investigating committee, which was opposed to Fritz Hesse and had been asked to look into negative evidence against the Bauhaus. In this context, Nonn suggested to Alfred Rosenberg that the Weimar pattern should be used as a model for the approach against the Dessau Bauhaus.
- 24 Konrad Nonn, Bericht V, Politische Zusammenhänge des Bauhauses, Dessau 10.7.1933, Dessau municipal archive, SB/29.
- 25 H. Jerike, Unser Handwerk und die Bauhaus-Ideen, in: Anhalter Rundschau, 18.8.1926, Bauhaus-Archiv Berlin, Gropius estate 23/13/219.
- 26 Kritik am Bauhaus. Lecture by Emil Högg to the Verband Deutscher Diplomingenieure, in: Dresdener Anzeiger, 30.11.1927, Bauhaus-Archiv Berlin, Gropius estate 23. Criticism by architect Rudolf Schwarz should also be mentioned in this context; this started in the twenties and led to the "Bauhaus-Debatte" in 1953.
- 27 Anhalter Woche, no. 10. 1929, Bauhaus-Archiv Berlin, press cuttings from Dessau newspapers.
- 28 op. cit. note 6, p. 251.
- 29 Die Landesfrauen-Arbeitsschule im Bauhaus, in: Die Heimat, illustrated supplement to the Anhalter Anzeiger, 2.9.1933.

Wolfgang Thöner

A symbol of hope, or of failure?

The Bauhaus building in publications



The Bauhaus building in Dessau is one of the buildings that is seen as the epitome of Modernism. As a butt of criticism, it remained central to debates about architectural history and cultural policy even when the real building moved far away from its original state as a result of different uses or crude conversions after severe damage. The large number of photographs dating from its early years helped to imagine a walk through the building. Indeed, architect Walter Gropius himself suggested this approach when he illustrated central tenets of his architectural credo with whole sequences of these photographs, in his book *bauhausbauten dessau*.¹ Many experienced architectural historians relied on this world of images, and indeed they had to do so, because for many decades the Bauhaus building was badly disfigured and accessible only with severe restrictions, as it was behind the Iron Curtain. There were so many of these photographs published immediately on completion that the young Julius Posener also yielded to the temptation to base his interpretation of the building on drawings and these very photographs, without visiting the site at all. His "first visit to the Dessau Bauhaus" did not take place until 1992, and caused him to revise his earlier opinions.² The particular "medialization" of the Bauhaus building made him too forget a truism that Walter Gropius had placed early in his foreword to his Bauhaus book: "Photography cannot reproduce the experience of space. The true proportions of a room or part of a building in relation to our fixed, absolute body-size create exciting tensions in the viewer when faced with the building itself, and these cannot be conveyed at all by a reduced, two-dimensional image."³ Interpretations produced after 1933 are based almost without exception on pictures and the canonized features. Thus a precise investigation of the building's original appearance, which has been concealed by a one-sided faith in the world of images, is called for, so that this epoch-making architecture can be assessed and interpreted at a new level, in awareness of the history of attitudes to it and changing use.

Encouragement and criticism, 1926–1932

Gropius did not rely entirely on the effect of the architecture and the "life" that it "organized" (Gropius). He used the public opening of the building in 1926 and a retrospective view formulated four years later as media to promote his theories and views about architecture and design.⁴ Due to this build-up, the Bauhaus building was bound to attract enormous publicity from the outset. The uncritical, effusive praise in some newspapers was a start. They talked about the "first monumental self-representation of the new approach to building" and the "most modern art school in the world".⁵ Astonishingly enough the first reactions from the promoters, supporters and journalistic comrades-in-arms of Modern architecture tended to be restrained at first. Paul Westheim did not intend "to gloss over obvious weaknesses. And absolutely not, when one is fighting for this new approach to architecture"; he said that it was not about a new style, but in the first place "about building more correctly, reasonably, intelligently and in the best sense more humanely in future".⁶ Adolf Behne took the same line, and he too was quick to point out the social aims.⁷ Ilya Ehrenburg was the first author to place the Bauhaus entirely in the traditional line of European enlightenment as a "triumph of lucidity".⁸ This particular power of the building, which could be called educational, was also noticed by other visitors in those days, including Rudolf Arnheim in 1927.⁹

Criticism that was entirely in agreement but put forward careful doubts and reservations was also to be found in another group of critics, those from the young Soviet Union, where they were also concerned – on a totally different social basis – with educating the "new man", something that came into almost all the reviews of the Bauhaus building. Thus one author wrote in 1928: "All the equipment and furniture makes such a strong and indelible impression that even living and working in the rooms for a year or two leaves certain traces behind in the sense of a certain aesthetic education."¹⁰ Ginzburg, like El Lissitzky and other Soviet architects and artists found a



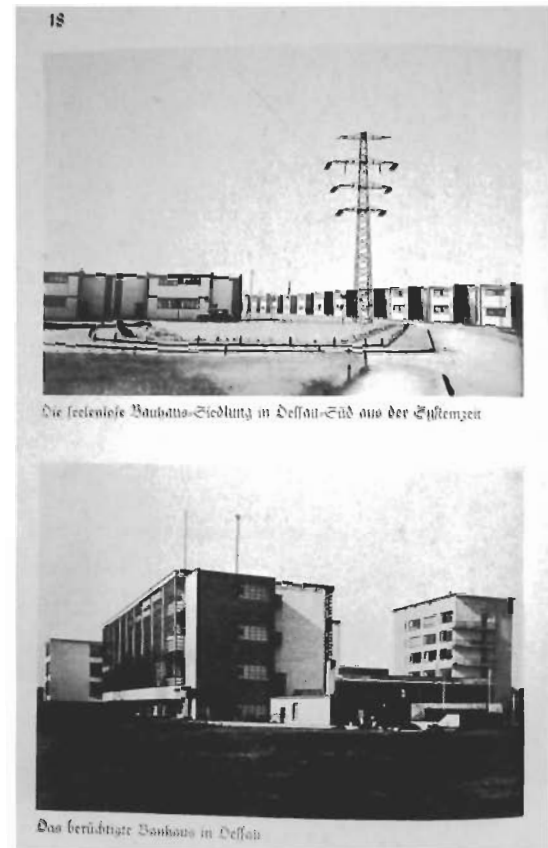
great deal in common with Russian Constructivism. But Soviet theoreticians criticized the fact that the "ideological" side of art, which had to aim at fundamental social change, was developed inadequately or not at all, and thus social aims and "formalistic practice" would inevitably fall apart.¹¹ Thus in the late twenties the dreaded word formalism came into criticism of the Bauhaus and its creations; it was not used in the Soviet Union as a campaign slogan against the Constructivists until 1932, and was to influence the response to the Bauhaus in the GDR in the fifties.

The Bauhaus building was hated from the outset by traditionalists and conservatives, who fulminated at all levels against the Bauhaus as an institution and against its products, its "un-German culture". But technical objections came into play as well, critical remarks by constructional engineers and architects, who were struck by actual problems at the Bauhaus in terms of structural physics. Konrad Nonn stood out in this respect, and drew lasting attention to himself with his general remarks on the Bauhaus in the *Zentralblatt der Bauverwaltung* in 1927, starting with a review of the recently completed Bauhaus building.¹² Nonn's objective analysis of some technical faults acknowledges that he recognizes some of Gropius's

intentions, and compares the reality of the building with its creator's postulates. This is also where later criticism was to start, and even today this is the critical tenor from the ranks of structural engineers.¹³

At its most successful the Bauhaus building became a model as one of the major protagonists in the "heroic epic" of Modernism's struggle with the "19th century style masquerade". This familiar historiographical theme was first introduced in 1923 by Adolf Behne in his book *The Modern Functional Building*:¹⁴ "The academic, 'false' 19th century as a background to 'renewal'; the separation of 'formal' and 'functional' building, Jugendstil as a 'preparatory style'; opposition from great 'leaders' – and finally the triumphant international 'functionalist' and 'rationalist' movement."¹⁵ Gustav Adolf Platz picked up this thread in his book *Die Baukunst der neuesten Zeit*, which appeared in 1927.¹⁶ In the same year, Walter Curt Behrendt, taking the same line, proclaimed the Sieg des neuen Baustils (Victory for the new building style),¹⁷ and one year later Sigfried Giedion published his book *Building in France. Building in Iron. Building in Ferroconcrete*,¹⁸ which finally made the Bauhaus building a protagonist in this "heroic epic". The Bauhaus building was juxtaposed with an exhibition building by Gustave Eiffel (Paris,

1878); the typography was extremely effective: the book was designed by László Moholy-Nagy, who was conceptually closest to Gropius at this time. The comment on the Bauhaus illustration was as follows: "Only after half a century are we able to explore the tensions (Giedion: Tensions in the aesthetic sense) inherent in the materials and overcome the decorative incrustation."¹⁹ The idea of peeling off, liberating, "making visible" is very clear here. But Giedion was still a long way from bestowing canonization. The first step in this direction was taken in 1929 by the American writer Henry-Russell Hitchcock in his book *Modern Architecture. Romanticism and Reintegration*.²⁰ The first canonization was completed in 1932 in the book *The International Style. Architecture since 1922*, written by Hitchcock with Philip Johnson.²¹ They formulated three principles for an international style in Modern architecture – "Architecture as Volume", "Concerning Regularity", and "The Avoidance of Applied Decoration"²² – which were presented with international examples of Modern architecture, and of course often featured the Bauhaus building. Despite all the resistance by Gropius and other architects to the introduction of a new stylistic concept, a selection of the various tendencies in Modern architecture was compiled here in terms of style. The Bauhaus building, when used as an example in the book, always remains part of an aesthetic argument. Almost a whole page is devoted to Walter Gropius's Fagus factory as a predecessor of the Bauhaus in the chapter on "History", saying: "Gropius was not destined to achieve again so fine and so coherent a production in the contemporary style before the Bauhaus in 1926. There he profited from the intervening aesthetic experimentation of the Dutch Neoplasticists. The Bauhaus is something more than a mere development from the technical triumph of the Alfeld factory."²³ In the chapter on modular regularity the Bauhaus building is adduced as an example of the expressive qualities to be found in a smooth wall, for symbolizing the "technique that lies at the basis (of architecture) and of which one knows from the complete building rather than seeing it". Hitchcock and Johnson's notion of the "International Style"



established itself as a current stylistic canon and made the Bauhaus building part of a stylistic history of architecture.

A symbol of "cultural decline"

Canonization made Modernism acceptable, able to be integrated without difficulty into the exchange of goods. The explosive force of the social visions and integrated concepts attached to it disappeared, the dynamic of movement declined, not least of all as a result of what Habermas called the "ready overtaxing" of Modern architecture.²⁴ Like all avant-garde architecture the Bauhaus had no real social anchor; Paul Klee's remark about his own work and work at the Bauhaus in the early twenties is relevant here: "No people supports us!"²⁵

The spreading concept of a Bauhaus style was symptomatic of this development. In 1930, when looking back at his years as director of the Bauhaus, Hannes Meyer assumed that any kind of Bauhaus style was the work of his predecessor Walter Gropius,²⁶ and Ernst Kallai, who was in charge of the Bauhaus magazine, writing in the

same year, seemed to be resigned about the success of this concept.²⁷ To this extent it is not surprising that Rudolf Schwarz called the Bauhaus style a "cul-de-sac" in 1932 and declared it to be a "condition that living architecture has long since got beyond".²⁸

Modernism's hopes did not fade only in the crisis-torn Western democracies, they were literally driven out of Nazi Germany and in the Stalinist Soviet Union. The Dessau citizens' association had voted against an "un-German" Bauhaus as early as 1926. After the fights between the various wings of the Nazi leadership élite it was "explained" to the German people in 1937 at the latest that the Bauhaus had been driven out of Dessau as an institution that was an enemy of the people.²⁹ It is interesting here that the Nazis argued principally against the aims and the social elements associated with the buildings. Stylistic criticisms were rare.

The second canonization, 1936-1945

The idea of Modernism's struggle for a new design and building culture, appropriate to the requirements of the times, for a new style, came to fruition

above all in the USA. Nikolaus Pevsner spotlighted Gropius's particular role for this epoch in 1936 in his book *Pioneers of the Modern Movement from William Morris to Walter Gropius*.³⁰ For him the interplay of "calculation and vision" that came to light for the first time in the Fagus factory culminated in the Bauhaus. The congruence that this implies between technical feasibility (engineering) and aesthetic and artistic appropriateness (architecture) causes Pevsner to risk comparison with buildings from previous epochs, as only Ehrenburg had done before him: he names cathedrals by Brunelleschi, Alberti and Michelangelo, the Sainte-Chapelle and the choir of Beauvais cathedral, but also more recent works, including in particular Bruno Taut's glass building for the 1914 Werkbund exhibition in Cologne.

Faced with the prevalent demonization of the Bauhaus in Germany, and the apparently inadequate response to his ideas and achievements in the USA, Walter Gropius did not just rely on help from sympathetic art and architecture historians: with Herbert Bayer and Marcel Breuer he organized the great Bauhaus exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, which paid par-



1936. PABLO PICASSO. *Les Femmes d'Alger (O. K. G.)*. Öl. „Am Kopf liegt sich die technische Erfindung der Simultanität offen, die gleichzeitig zwei Aspekte eines einzigen Objekts zeigt, in dessen Fall das Profil und das ganze Gesicht. Auch die „Zungen“ der sich überlappenden Flächen sind charakteristisch.“ (Katalog der Picasso-Ausstellung, Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1973, S. 77).



1929. WALTER GROPIUS. Bauhaus Dessau, 1926. Höhe des Werkstatthügels. Die diesem Kell sind Innen- und Außen eines Gebäudes gleichzeitig dargestellt. Die ausgedehnten transparenten Flächen sind durch Kompositionierung der Ecken die verschiedenen Beziehungen des Innen- und Außen- und eine der „Kernbeziehungen“ von der zeitgenössischen Architektur zu verdeutlichen.

ticular attention to his time as director. But this exhibition did not just win friends and critical admirers for Bauhaus – as Tom Wolfe was to assume decades later³¹ – as “it distorted the value of the Bauhaus in the development of Modern art to such an extent that an absolute wave of outrage descended on the museum from all over the country about ‘The Bauhaus Helotry’³² from all over the country. Alfred H. Barr jr., the director of the museum and America’s high priest of Modern art consequently distanced himself ... from Gropius with some sarcastic remarks.”³³ Thus the Bauhaus and with it the Bauhaus building became a subject of architectural controversies again in the USA.³⁴ Walter Gropius’s old comrade in this struggle Sigfried Giedion, who had also emigrated to the USA, again cast himself as a leading figure and took up Nikolaus Pevsner’s idea of identifying lines of development in history, which he defined in his concept of the “constituent facts”,³⁵ which became the main criterion for his observations in his book *Space, Time and Architecture*, which appeared in 1941. This book quickly advanced to become a standard work, and took the “heroic epic of Modernism” to a high point, in which Walter Gropius and the Bauhaus building are naturally of crucial significance. This was the first time that Frank Lloyd Wright’s influence on Gropius had been so clearly identified. Giedion picks up Gropius’s requirements when describing and evaluating buildings: the creation of a feeling of soaring space, the “dematerializing quality” of the glass used and the transparency of the building achieved through the “glass curtain hung round the corner” are evaluated as a new quality within a “loosening process”³⁶ that started with Wright. There is, however, a second influence that Gropius pointed out himself as early as 1930, but that Giedion put in a nutshell: “The generation of Le Corbusier, Gropius, Mies van der Rohe, and the others knew the work of the artistic explorers and the new spacial feelings which they had discovered. Finally they were able to select from the accumulated developments in engineering just the means that were needed to give architectonic expression to this new space sense.”³⁷ The new concept of space – that was the principle

of simultaneity, in other words a space-time concept. Giedion juxtaposes, in a double-page spread, a photograph of the transparent corner of the workshop building with an illustration of Pablo Picasso’s painting *L’Arlésienne* of 1911/12, and talks of translating this principle developed in painting into architecture.³⁸ In the relevant text he says “In this case it is the interior and the exterior of a building which are presented simultaneously. The extensive transparent areas, by dematerializing the corners, permit the hovering relations of planes and the kind of ‘overlapping’ which appears in contemporary painting.”³⁹ The Bauhaus building is allotted a special role in the development of a real style, whose “constituent facts”⁴⁰ – Giedion saw them in the undulating wall, the juxtaposition of nature and human structures, the tendency towards an open plan – stand out against “transitory facts”, i.e. historically superseded stylistic forms. This is not a question of forms alone for Giedion, but for him too these are forms that do not only signify the life that they are intended to organize, but help to create it: “The Bauhaus buildings were by no means intended to continue the medieval tradition, as in Oxford and Cambridge, for example. The intention was a keen determination to create an island of concentration in contrast with the chaotic inner turmoil of the world, a entity within a burning country. It is clear only in retrospect that here, limited to education, something was being anticipated that is gradually coming to be considered as a requirement for the whole form of our lives: reconciliation and interpenetration of the individual and the social sphere.”⁴¹

The Bauhaus as a concept vs. the concept of an enemy

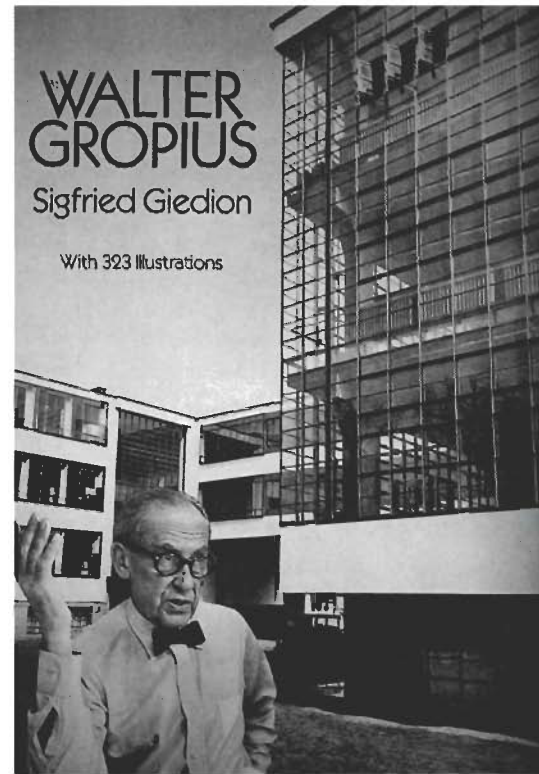
These views and theories, developed above all by the avant-garde who emigrated to the USA in the period from 1933 to 1945, were very quickly on the scene in Germany and in Dessau after the end of the Fascist dictatorship. Newspaper articles in what was then the Soviet Zone associated the building with ideas of democracy and artistic freedom.⁴² But after 1947, when the doctrine of socialist realism was prevalent, the Bauhaus building

attracted ideological criticism as an example of architecture that was "cosmopolitan" and "hostile to the people".⁴³ The Bauhaus became a regular concept of the enemy in a Cold War that was steering towards its first climax.⁴⁴

It is interesting that a polarization, but of a different cultural and ideological nature, can be detected in the discussions that were going on at the same time in West Germany. The Bauhaus offered the possibility of being taken as an outstanding example of the few German cultural achievements of the twentieth century that can be assessed positively, and used as a basis for developing a new democratic culture – from education to spatial and objective expression. And so people picked up the thread of the "heroic epic of Modernism" that has been described. Many of the successful Bauhaus members had developed their own version of the Bauhaus idea in their own work and also when reflecting about it. Some of them were involved in the attempt to found a new institution within this tradition: the Hochschule der Gestaltung (HfG) in Ulm. The link with the Bauhaus was established there from the outset in architectural terms as well, when Max Bill defined the programme and the architectural form that the HfG buildings would take. But for many contemporaries "a deep gulf between the HfG and the Bauhaus" was revealed even on the opening day, 2 October 1955, which became visible "in the discrepancy between the cultivated Bauhaus buildings and the 'concrete bunker' on the Kuhberg".⁴⁵

Conservative criticism sprang back to life very shortly after the war as well. Hans Sedlmayr adopted the "most extreme counter-position to Modernism" in his book *Verlust der Mitte*, which appeared in 1947 and "as a speculative and shoddy effort (provided) all conservative and reactionary spirits with an excuse for the Nazi period, as this shrank to be the end of a development that ... was described ... as the way from the French Revolution into 'unfettered chaos', illustrated by Modern art."⁴⁶

Criticism came from conservative circles as well as from the ranks of a "different Modernism", including Hugo Häring⁴⁷ and Ernst



Bloch;⁴⁸ this reached its climax in the so-called "Bauhaus debate".⁴⁹ Here the engineers' criticisms cropped up again, reproaching the Bauhaus building for technical failures. But the Bauhaus's cultural claims were central to the discussion, and here criticism was aimed at the educational and socially emancipatory intentions manifest in the Bauhaus building: Rudolf Steinbach criticized the Bauhaus in 1953 for wanting to be a building for work and for celebration at one and the same time.⁵⁰

Within the architectural-historical debate Giulio Carlo Argan's book *Walter Gropius e la Bauhaus*⁵¹ – published in 1951 in Turin – is still to be seen as the most successful pulling together of the threads of positive Bauhaus evaluation. For Argan it is "a masterpiece for Gropius and the whole of European architecture".⁵² Argan's analysis of the building starts with an artistic interpretation – combined with references to contemporary physics – of the dynamic of mass and movement that is built into the architecture. He sees the alternation of positive and negative elements, the dynamic balance of corporeality and space, not just as an expression of space, time and rational construction, but also as an educational impulse, which has

a moral impact on the building's users. For him this includes a correction of the concept of functionalism, which carried very negative implications at the time. For him the Bauhaus building above all proves "how Gropius based the concept of 'functionality' much more on a design principle than on external (still naturalistic) ideas of practice and constructional technique."⁵³ He said that the Bauhaus – precisely in the combination of a building for work and celebration that Steinbach criticized at the same time – had an antimonumental role, in that it is "a factory and a school at the same time": "Here work, study and recreation grew into a harmonious whole," became "a community – which he (Gropius) organized himself, teaching how to exert a purifying and liberating influence on the world –, a place, a habitation, a positive existence."⁵⁴

Leonardo Benevolo argues similarly a few years later. He did not rely on the images alone, but sought out the buildings himself in about 1960 and compared them with photographs from the time when they were built.⁵⁵ Like Giedion and Argan before him he acknowledged the "that unruffled coherence"⁵⁶ of the ensemble, and then placed the dynamic balance, the particular quality of the way in which all the elements of the building relate to each other, at the forefront of his observations. Here his remarks coincide with those of Reyner Banham, who praised the unique quality of the planning and the spatial qualities of the building in 1962, and called it "the first unmistakable harbinger of an industrial style."⁵⁷ Benevolo made it clear above all that the materials – white plaster, steel frame and glass – were of artistic significance in the first place, intended "to stress the geometrical relations":⁵⁸ and thus by no means corresponded to a false image of utilitarian functionalism. He points out, in view of the then horrifying state of the building, that this leads to "problems of maintenance", and "though cared for equally carefully, the Bauhaus building has certainly aged worse than the Fagus factory". He stresses more firmly than any of his predecessors that without the life associated with it the Bauhaus building was not capable of becoming a ruin that could produce an effect of Romantic magic. It is, he says,

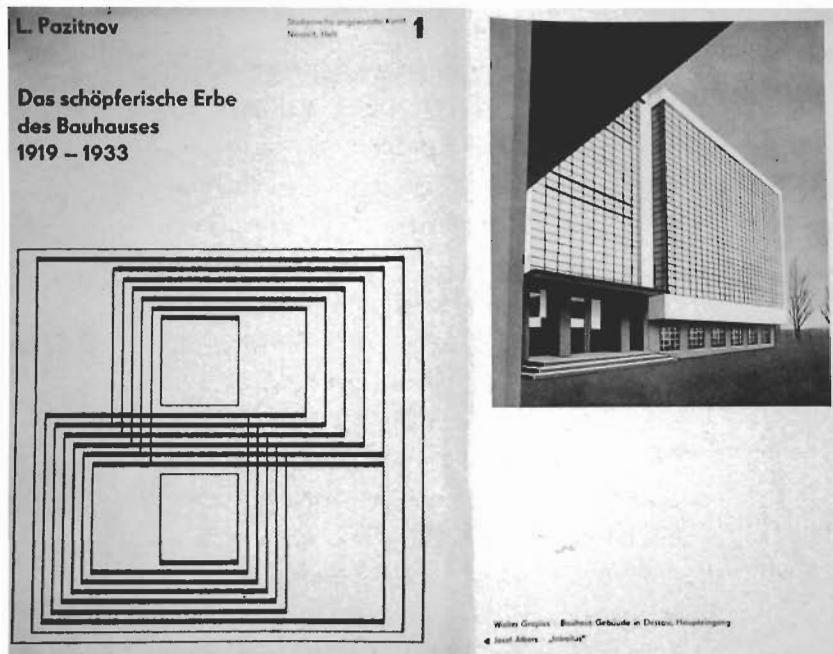
much more like "a pathetic heap of shattered walls and doors and window frames".⁵⁹

Differentiation, 1960–1976

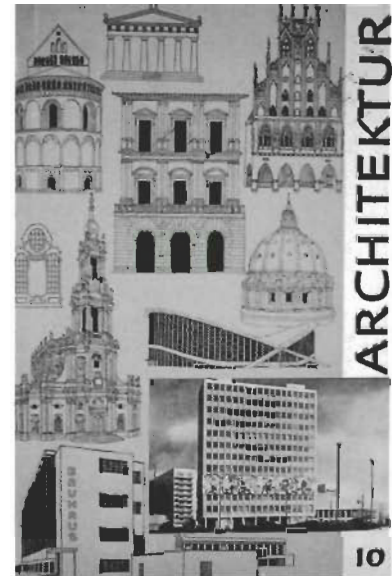
The changing social conditions in the GDR in the early sixties, driven mainly by the experiment of tackling economic problems by reforming the planning system, made new freedoms possible at least for a time, and also led to the germination of new hopes. Revaluation of the Bauhaus in the GDR was introduced in 1962 with the publication of a book in German translation, L. Pazinov's *Das Fortschrittliche Erbe des Bauhauses*.⁶⁰ The first thoughts by GDR authors on this subject started to appear shortly after that.⁶¹ The Bauhaus became a positive point of reference, and in 1966 Diether Schmidt even condemned the condemnation of the school that had taken place only a decade previously.⁶² Norbert Huse was the first Western writer to address the question, plausibly and in a sophisticated manner, of what social strata supported the Bauhaus and why it failed.⁶³ He also emphasized the architect's complex relationship with the tradition of Neues Bauen, which Gropius himself had helped to develop. Knowledge of this also reveals the particular design method, which centred on finding a form for the main functions of living and producing. The models were "building forms from the realms of industry and administration" and not, " – as had often happened in earlier art schools – forms derived from temples, palaces and castles".⁶⁴

In the early seventies at the latest the predominant evaluations of the Bauhaus building in the East and the West became diametrically opposed. In the West, under the influence of post-Modernism, the Bauhaus was seen as failure to be got over,⁶⁵ while at the same time in East Germany a new hope for social changes developed, also via analysing and interpreting the Bauhaus building, but at the same time it was twisted as an apologia for SED programming, above all the housing construction programme in the "unified economic and social policy".⁶⁶

Title and front flap from the book "Das schöpferische Erbe des Bauhauses" (The Creative Heritage of the Bauhaus) by L. Pazitnov, Berlin 1963.



Title of the school textbook "Architektur" for year 10 in the GDR's general schools, 1st edition 1965; Bauhaus building with the Haus des Lehrers and the Kongreßhalle at Alexanderplatz, Berlin.



Old conflicts and new life, 1977 to the present day

Both the history of use and architectural-historical evaluations developed in the field of tension between an attempt to harness the building for ideological and political ends and attempts to make the legacy of the Bauhaus fruitful in providing a real improvement in quality for the surrounding world of space and objects. This applies to texts by Karin and Heinz Hirdina⁶⁷ and particularly to the writings of Lothar Kühne, who always provided his thoughts on a careful society with interpretations of the Bauhaus building based on sympathetic descriptions. For Kühne the lucidity and openness of the building contrasted with the "devastation" of the environment, which fluctuated between desolate seriality, lacking a concept not just in aesthetic terms (embodied in the slab structures) and helpless neo-historicist and private creation of signs (in the public and in the contracted private space). Here without a doubt – under quite different conditions – the fight for Modernism and for the ideals associated with it became a fight against everything opposed to a truly humane, democratic society.⁶⁸

Manfredo Tafuri and Francesco Dal Co came to similar conclusions. They interpreted the Bauhaus building as an experimental "urbanis-

tic model on a reduced scale".⁶⁹ Like Kühne they establish a correlation between architectural form and the requirements of a new life that lie behind this: "If the school anticipates the harmonious working organization of a society liberated from its contradictions, and if the teaching is attempting to create formal models intended to compensate for the inadequacies of capitalist work distribution, then the building that houses these activities must express the organic development of its functions in a continuity that is emblematically left to the use of the public that is to be introduced to this new life-model."⁷⁰ He goes on to say that "neo-plastic fragmentism" finds a harmonious solution in that "the balanced forms" derives from "perfect integration of the functions and their organic use by the 'community', whose work (knows) no contradictions".⁷¹ Thus the building has an inherently "heroic character, because of "the tradition that lives in it and is embodied by it".⁷²

In his "critical history" of Modern architecture, Kenneth Frampton adopted a sophisticated and somewhat distanced attitude to the Bauhaus building.⁷³ By now the international architectural scene and the debate accompanying it was dominated by post-Modernism, whose theoretical and propagandist protagonists like Charles Jencks or Tom Wolfe proclaimed the end or at least the re-



vision of Modernism. Thus the myth of Modernism and of the Bauhaus, already dented or relativized by objective criticism (including self-criticism by the old "heroes"), acquired a "counter-myth" of precisely the Bauhaus's guilt in terms of dictatorial uniformity and dissection in towns: Heinrich Klotz saw the Bauhaus building as the beginning of the "abolition of the town by the free-standing building".⁷⁴

But academic reappraisal of the Bauhaus legacy continued beyond any ideology-laden myths and counter-myths.⁷⁵ Gerd Kähler examined the "decline of symbol" in architecture, but for him Modernism's search for a new expressive vocabulary does not mean separating this from the associated social visions. He sees the "steamer motif in architecture", linked with associations of gliding along calmly and safely, as realized in parts of the Bauhaus building: economically deployed resources "– railing, porthole, white structure on a dark base – suggest a steamer, and this happens only in the residential and studio wing, in other words at the point where the relationship of community, residence and working is closest, the association with a monastery as a living community is clearest".⁷⁶ Kähler sees the Bauhaus building, defined by Tafuri and Dal Co, as a miniaturized urbanistic model, as a monastery, and thus identifies a

particular feature of Gropius's planning: "Gropius' theme is not the city as a type, but the dwelling", as the utopian element in the Bauhaus members' self-sufficient community "cannot emerge in a large city".⁷⁷ Harmen Thies refuted Colin Rowe and Robert Slutzky's 1968 charge of one-dimensionality in the transparency of Gropius's architecture – in a deliberate contrast with the multi-dimensional quality of the transparency of Le Corbusier's architecture: "The glass corners and surfaces" of the Fagus factory, the Werkbund office building and the Bauhaus building "are transparent in precisely this sense: they are literally and really transparent and translucent", and "by concentrating one's glance on and through their surfaces they can be seen both as thin, stretched foils, as lattice screens of steel and glass, just as they can be simultaneously comprehended as structural bodies ...: both have their validity."⁷⁸

In the late eighties discussion about the failure or the "perfection" of the "Modern project" (Jürgen Habermas) flared up again, and once more the Bauhaus building came into it. The flight of post-Modernism was followed by a less than smooth landing on the ground of the realities of a world that was becoming increasingly complicated and unaccountable, characterized by a "post-Modern Modernism".⁷⁹ After the fall of the Wall the Bauhaus building, the ideas associated with it and the life that could be found in it again from 1976 were not a "finished" story. Discussion about the Bauhaus building received a new boost. As if to prove the strength of the ideas that it evokes, every aspect of it is once more the subject of lively argument. It is evaluated as a lonely, unachieved model, a noble failure with its high ethical aspirations as an "educational object", in the writings of Konrad Wünsche,⁸⁰ but objective classification of Modern architecture as highly artistic stylistic architecture, whose innovation lay mainly in a subtle reversal of classical architectural motifs can be found alongside this.⁸¹ Jonas Geist takes up observations made by Hitchcock and Johnson in 1932 when he identifies the Bauhaus building as an important point in the development of Modernism, whose "vanishing-point" was Karl Friedrich Schin-

kel's Building Academy of 1831–1836, in whose façade Schinkel wanted to try to combine "the Gothic constructive system, its vertical quality, with the ancient system of supports and beams".⁸² Geist thus interprets representing the internal support structure of the building as an "abstraction of the temple façade". Both the Fagus factory and the "Bauhaus workshop wing" are buildings "in which pure cubic form recurs in combination with an intricate façade structure".⁸³ This contrasts with post-Modern criticism, which continues to crop up, and which finds in the Bauhaus building in particular an example of Modern architecture's "history-free purity of form".⁸⁴ Criticism from the structural engineers' camp also sprang back to life, seeing in the Bauhaus the "beginning of the struc-

tural sins" caused by setting a "structural design" against old building traditions, which would go hand in hand with loss of knowledge about correct building.⁸⁵

Speaking retrospectively about the Bauhaus, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe said that it was indestructible because it was to be understood as a living idea. This living idea is seen very clearly in the vigorous disputes that are constantly conducted about the Bauhaus building, based not just on the architecture, as the spatial and objective expression of this idea, but also interact with the building's condition and use.

- 1 Walter Gropius, *Bauhausbauten Dessau* (1930), Reprint Mainz, Berlin 1974. Cf.: Rolf Sachsse, *Bild und Bau, Zur Nutzung technischer Medien beim Entwurf von Architektur*, Braunschweig, Wiesbaden 1997, p. 137 ff.
- 2 Julius Posener, *Die Konstruktion vor sich sehen*, in: *Tagespiegel*, Berlin, 1.2.1992.
- 3 Walter Gropius, op. cit., note 1, p. 11.
- 4 Cf.: *Bauhaus. Zeitschrift für Gestaltung*, issue 1, 1926; Walter Gropius, *Internationale Architektur*, Munich 1925.
- 5 Quotations from the *Berliner Börsen-Kurier* and the *Berliner Illustrierte*, both December 1926, quoted from: Christine Kutschke, *Bauhausbauten der Dessauer Zeit*, Dissertation, Hochschule für Architektur und Bauwesen Weimar, 1981.
- 6 Paul Westheim, in: *Berliner Börsenzeitung*, 15.12.1926.
- 7 Adolf Behne, in: *Reclams Universum*, 43, 1926/27, vol. 1, p. 318.
- 8 Ilya Ehrenburg, *Der Verrückte Eimer* (1929), in: Ilya Ehrenburg: *Visum der Zeit*, Leipzig 1982, p. 94.
- 9 Rudolf Arnheim, *Das Bauhaus in Dessau*, in: *Die Weltbühne*, 23, 1927.
- 10 Aranovich, *Architekturnye nastroeniia intendencii v Germanii*, in: *Strot. prom.*, Moscow 1928, 8, p. 743, quoted from: Christian Schädlich, *Das Bauhaus in der sowjetischen Fachliteratur der zwanziger Jahre*, in: *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Hochschule für Architektur und Bauwesen Weimar*, 13, 1978, 5/6, p. 384.
- 11 op. cit. note 10.
- 12 Konrad Nonn: *Zusammenfassendes über das Bauhaus. Eine Kritik aus Fachkreisen*, in: *Zentralblatt der Bauverwaltung*, 1927, no. 10, quoted from: *Anhaltische Rundschau*, 20.3.1927.
- 13 Cf. note 85.
- 14 Adolf Behne, *The Modern Functional Building* (*Der moderne Zweckbau*, 1923), Santa Monica 1996.
- 15 Vittorio Magnago Lampugnani, *Die Geschichte der "Modernen Bewegung" in der Architektur 1925–1941: eine kritische Übersicht*, in: *Moderne Architektur in Deutschland 1900 bis 1950. Expressionismus und Neue Sachlichkeit*, Stuttgart 1994.
- 16 Gustav Adolf Platz, *Die Baukunst der neuesten Zeit*, Berlin 1927.
- 17 Walter Curt Behrendt, *Der Sieg des neuen Baustils*, Stuttgart 1927.
- 18 Sigfried Giedion, *Bauen in Frankreich. Bauen in Eisen. Bauen in Eisenbeton*, Leipzig, Berlin 1928. English edition: Santa Monica, 1995.
- 19 Sigfried Giedion, op. cit., note 18, p. 133.
- 20 Henry-Russell Hitchcock, *Modern Architecture. Romanticism and Reintegration*, New York 1929.
- 21 Henry-Russell Hitchcock, Jr., and Philip Johnson, *The International Style: Architecture since 1922*, New York 1932.
- 22 op. cit., note 21, p. 40, 56, 69..
- 23 op. cit., note 21, p. 29..
- 24 Jürgen Habermas, *Moderne und postmoderne Architektur*, in: *Die andere Tradition, Architektur in München von 1830 bis heute*, Munich 1986, p. 14.
- 25 Paul Klee, *Über die moderne Kunst* (manuscript for a lecture in Jena, 1924), quoted from: Paul Klee, *Kunst-Lehre*, Leipzig 1987, p. 8.
- 26 Hannes Meyer, *Mein Herauswurf aus dem Bauhaus*, quoted from: Hannes Meyer: *Bauen und Gesellschaft, Schriften, Bauten, Projekte*, Dresden 1980, p. 67 ff.
- 27 Ernst Kallai, *Zehn Jahre Bauhaus*, in: Ernst Kallai: *Vision und Formgesetz, Aufsätze über Kunst und Kultur 1921–1933*, Leipzig, Weimar 1986.
- 28 Rudolf Schwarz, *Baustelle Deutschland* (1932), in: Rudolf

- Schwarz: Wegweisung der Technik und andere Schriften zum Neuen Bauen 1926–1961, Braunschweig 1979, p. 141.
- 29 Anhalt im Dienste des Führers, Dessau 1937, p. 8.
- 30 Nikolaus Pevsner, *Pioneers of the Modern Movement from William Morris to Walter Gropius*, London 1936.
- 31 Cf. note 65.
- 32 Harvey M. Watts, *Bauhaus Helotry*, in: *Art Digest*, 1.8.1939, p. 26 ff.
- 33 Winfried Nerdinger, *Das Bauhaus zwischen Mythisierung und Kritik*, in: Ulrich Conrads et al. (ed.): *Die Bauhaus-Debatte 1953, Dokumente einer verdrängten Kontroverse*, Braunschweig, Wiesbaden 1994, p. 14.
- 34 Margret Kentgens-Craig, *The Bauhaus and America: First Contacts, 1919–1936*, MIT Press, Cambridge/Mass. 1999.
- 35 Sigfried Giedion, *Space, Time and Architecture. The Growth of a New Tradition*, Cambridge, Mass. 1941, p. 18.
- 36 Op. cit. note 35.
- 37 Op. cit. note 35, p. 404.
- 38 Op. cit. note 35.
- 39 Op. cit. note 35, p. 403.
- 40 Op. cit. note 35.
- 41 Op. cit. note 35.
- 42 Cf.: Stiftung Bauhaus Dessau (ed.), ... *das Bauhaus zerstört: 1945–1947: das Bauhaus stört ...*, Dessau 1996.
- 43 Cf.: Andreas Schätke, *Zwischen Bauhaus und Stalinallée. Architekturdiskussion im östlichen Deutschland 1945–1955*, *Bauwelt Fundamente*, Brunswick, Wiesbaden 1991; Thomas Hoscislawski, *Bauen zwischen Macht und Ohnmacht. Architektur und Stadtplanung in der DDR*, Berlin 1991.
- 44 Walter Ulbricht, speech to the Volkskammer (1951), quoted from: Schätke, op. cit. note 43, p. 144.
- 45 Hans Frei, *Konkrete Architektur? Über Max Bill als Architekt*, Baden 1991, p. 15.
- 46 Winfried Nerdinger, op. cit. note 33, pp. 14–15.
- 47 Hugo Häring, *Vom Neuen Bauen*, Berlin 1957. Hugo Häring had constructed a contrast between mediterranean geometry and nordic organicism even in the late 20s, using ethnological and psychological arguments. Cf.: Nerdinger: op. cit. note 33, p. 12.
- 48 Ernst Bloch, *Das Prinzip Hoffnung*, Frankfurt am Main 1959. Artists like Friedensreich Hundertwasser („Verschimmelungsmanifest“, 1958) and reformers like Hugo Kükelhaus criticized restrictively defined Modern architecture.
- 49 op. cit. note 33; Rudolf Schwarz's contribution, *Was dennoch besprochen werden muß*, pp. 163–178, is of particular interest in terms of the 1953 discussion.
- 50 Rudolf Steinbach, *Wo liegt eigentlich der Kern der Diskussion um Rudolf Schwarz?*, in: op. cit. note 33, pp. 152–160.
- 51 Giulio Carlo Argan, *Walter Gropius e la Bauhaus*, Turin 1951. Quotations from German edition: *Walter Gropius und das Bauhaus*, Braunschweig, Wiesbaden 1983.
- 52 op. cit. note 51, p. 67.
- 53 op. cit. note 51, p. 68.
- 54 op. cit. note 51, p. 68.
- 55 Leonardo Benevolo, *History of Modern Architecture*. 2 vols., Cambridge/Mass. 1977, vol. 2, pp. 425–428.
- 56 op. cit. note 55, p. 424.
- 57 Reyner Banham, *Theory and Design in the First Machine Age*, London 1952, p. 287.
- 58 Benevolo, op. cit. note 55, p. 426.
- 59 op. cit. note 55, p. , p. 427 f.
- 60 Pazinov, *Das Fortschrittliche Erbe des Bauhauses, 1919–1933*, Berlin 1963.
- 61 Lothar Lang, *Das Bauhaus 1919–1933*, Berlin 1965.
- 62 Diether Schmidt, *Das Bauhaus*, Dresden 1966, p. 7.
- 63 Norbert Huse, „*Neues Bauen*“ 1928–1933. *Moderne Architektur in der Weimarer Republik*, Munich 1975, p. 124 ff.
- 64 op. cit. note 63.
- 65 Tom Wolfe, *From Bauhaus to our House*, New York 1981.
- 66 Cf. note 43.
- 67 Karin Hirdina, *Pathos der Sachlichkeit*, Berlin 1981; Heinz Hirdina, *Gestalten für die Serie: Design in der DDR 1949–1985*, Dresden 1988.
- 68 Lothar Kühne, *Haus und Landschaft*, Dresden 1985, p. 214.
- 69 Manfredo Tafuri and Francesco Dal Co, *Modern Architecture*, New York 1979. German edition: *Weltgeschichte der Architektur: Klassische Moderne*, Stuttgart 1988, p. 130.
- 70 op. cit. note 69, p. 132.
- 71 op. cit. note 69, p. 132.
- 72 op. cit. note 69, p. 134.
- 73 Kenneth Frampton, *Modern Architecture. A critical history*, London 1980.
- 74 Heinrich Klotz, *Moderne und Postmoderne. Architektur von 1960–1980*, 2nd ed., Braunschweig, Wiesbaden 1981, p. 79.
- 75 It is beyond the scope of this essay to go into the great monographs on Gropius's work by Karin Wilhelm, Winfried Nerdinger, Christian Schädlich/Hartmut Probst and Reginald R. Isaacs. Cf. also bibliography on recent Gropius literature: IRB – index no. 1349, *Architekt – Walter Gropius*, 3rd enlarged edition, Stuttgart 1992.
- 76 Gerd Kähler, *Architektur als Symbolverfall. Das Dampfervotiv in der Baukunst*, Braunschweig, Wiesbaden 1981, p. 79.
- 77 op. cit. note 76, p. 82; cf. also Adolf Max Vogt, *Das Schwebe-Syndrom in der Architektur der zwanziger Jahre*, in: *Das architektonische Urteil*, Basel 1990.
- 78 Harmen Thies, *Glass corners*, in: *Daidalos*, September 1989, p. 111.
- 79 Wolfgang Welsch, *Wie modern war die moderne Architektur?*, in: *Bauwelt* 1992, issue 12.
- 80 Konrad Wünsche, *Bauhaus, Versuche das Leben zu ordnen*, Berlin 1989.
- 81 Edward R. Ford, *The Details of Modern Architecture*, Cambridge/Mass. 1990.
- 82 Jonas Geist, *Karl Friedrich Schinkel, Die Bauakademie*, Frankfurt am Main 1993, p. 77.
- 83 op. cit. note 82, p. 82.
- 84 Heinrich Klotz, *Moderne, Postmoderne, Zweite Moderne*, Munich 1994, p. 21.
- 85 Cf.: Rüdiger Krone, *Wackeln am Thron der Architekturgötter*, in: *Mitteldeutsche Zeitung, Regionalseite Dessau*, 26.1.1996; Günter Kowa, *Sündenfall am Bauhaus?*, in: *Mitteldeutsche Zeitung*, 31.1.1996.

Julius Posener

A visit to the Dessau Bauhaus



Front of the workshop wing.

Main entrance to the workshop wing.

It is not possible to represent the Bauhaus visually. Since it was built (1915–16), more pictures have represented this building than any other, even in this era that is so fond of architectural photography. We all knew it by heart, and recognized or rejected it. And then an ancient man comes to Dessau at last – and sees the Bauhaus for the first time.

Just take the famous and infamous glass building, the workshop building. Even the words glass building that I'm using here smack of prejudice: of positive prejudice: "Well, it's come off at last, this dream of a new architecture has become reality", or negative: "It just doesn't work, glass isn't enough, it dissipates the building". But when you see the famous glass building, the first thing that strikes you is this: how relatively untransparent it seems. This is quite fundamentally because the continuous "glass surfaces" are provided with a continuous close-meshed steel frame. I do not believe that such a close mesh was needed to support the large glass wall. If you look around the Bauhaus for a little longer, you find this tight framing on much smaller windows. So it is probably an element of architecture – or even of decoration.

We all know all too well how impractical glass buildings were – and have remained; you can't work in these workshops in summer because it's too hot and you can't work in them in winter because you freeze. This criticism – and it is justified – was constantly levelled at the Bauhaus's glass structure.

But this is a criticism that is true less of this one famous building than of a marked tendency in the early years of this century; there has never been so much talk about the practical problems of building, and people have never known less about them. The glass roof that Peter Behrens built over the AEG assembly plant before 1914 had to be largely covered over shortly after completion because it was impossible to work there. I could mention other examples. There were probably two reasons why the Bauhaus glass building was persistently criticized: one was that, unlike Behrens's assembly plant, it was impossible to change anything here. The workshop rooms are light to the

The following illustrations show a tour of the Bauhaus building in 1998.

centre, and have to remain so. In the assembly plant, which has wide windows, the glass roof was not needed. So Gropius had miscalculated, perhaps he did not calculate at all, and simply didn't know what he was doing: a magnificent opportunity to criticize something that was later called functionalism! But it is strange that it is not the unbroken run of glass on both sides of these rooms that catch the eye. What does catch the eye is the structure.

These rooms are dominated by the structural concrete frames that follow in sequence within them. The frames are like this: a support stands in the middle of the room – the rooms are very wide – and the two side supports are placed in front of the glazed outer walls. In order to hold these – and the ceiling – the frame above has to protrude as far as the outer wall. This protrusion is not just shown, it is emphasized. It is the frame

135



View of the bridge from the main staircase in the workshop wing.
Main staircase in the workshop wing.



that is the feature of these rooms, not the outside wall. The oblique frame sections are shown with delight as they rise from the supports to the beam: typical concrete construction elements – at least, as it was understood at the time. And so it was this, showing the supporting frame precisely, that the architect apparently valued; and one finds this delight in explaining the structure everywhere in the Bauhaus. Just take another spatial section, the corridor in front of the rooms in the bridge that joins the two parts of the Bauhaus together. This was an important corridor, because there were important rooms in the bridge, the masters' rooms and Gropius's own office. The ceiling above the corridor consists of diagonally protruding beams: the protrusion is intentionally emphasized. This part of the structure can be called logical: the corridor protrudes, and we are intended to see that. But the fact that the window that runs through the corridor is not a through window but consists of two less wide, but deeper windows on the sides and a wide – and less deep – central window, and that the side windows are positioned further outside than the wide central window, can really not be seen until you walk into the corridor; it is scarcely

View from the 2nd level of the bridge of the Fachhochschule section.
View from the staircase of the Fachhochschule section of the bridge and the workshop wing.

137



Staircase in the Fachhochschule section.
Foyer in the Fachhochschule section.

138



discernible from the outside. But inside the effect is so strange that you keep going into the corridor – or the corridors. Corridors are always difficult. These are very successful – by artificial means, I admit. In any case, the size and the protrusion of the side windows make it possible to take a close look at the windows, and that means the construction of the windows.

The architect certainly intended us to be constantly aware of the structure: concrete frames and steel windows; of modern construction and what it can achieve. The intention was quite clearly to keep the people who worked there constantly aware of this modern construction and what it can achieve. They should keep being aware of it. And they do stay aware of it all the time.

Incidentally this is not presented in a doctrinaire fashion; and there are "places" in the Bauhaus where this precise presentation is abandoned. The main staircase is interesting in this respect. The continuous window on the stairs is like the Bauhaus glass walls, it is divided into small sections. When you go into the hall, you are faced with a viewing window in one piece! Yes of course, modern technology can do that as well.

The spatial division is essentially simple, and you are constantly brought back to the stairs, the hallways, the corridors. You can see why Schlemmer's group painting is also a painting of this staircase: yes, it is the heart of the Bauhaus. I should like to add just this about Gropius's Bauhaus architecture: as everything structural – and spatial – and as I have said it is not possible to separate the one from the other – is always present, present and comprehensible, you very quickly feel very calm, very much as though you belong, animated, in this building that was once considered to be a signal, indeed a blast on the trumpet. Ultimately this may have been Gropius's intention: he was not interested in sensation for sensation's sake. But this impression – and it remains, you take it away with you – is the last thing you would have expected. And I constantly wondered what would have become of me if I had subjected myself to this influence when I was a student (when the Bauhaus was built). But I didn't want to.

The Bauhaus should not be imitated. And it isn't possible to do so, because the constructions, which were new at the time and presented as sensible by the architect, do not concern us today. Whether the whole question does not concern us is a different matter. I think it does concern us: the fact that a building which, and let us not forget this, is entirely an ideosyncratic architecture has a calming influence on us because it constantly explains itself, – that does concern us, in my opinion; that is the aim of any architecture for life. And the fact that any sense of this is constantly decreasing is what makes an encounter with the Bauhaus so important.¹

¹ First published under the title "Die Konstruktion vor sich sehen. Ein erster Besuch im Dessauer Bauhaus", in: Der Tagesspiegel, Berlin, February 1992.



Studio building: foyer (also to the refectory) and corridor with view of the staircase.

140



Former boilerhouse under the intermediate section (celebration area).
South staircase in the workshop wing.



141



Ralf Körner

Uses of the Bauhaus building, 1926-1989



Walter Gropius's director's office. Gropius had brought the desk and armchair from Weimar. The glass showcase contains objects from the Weimar Bauhaus period. Photograph by Erich Consemüller, c. 1927.

The concept of the Bauhaus has become a complex phenomenon because it has been so intensively analysed, both academically and intellectually. But alongside all the debates about architecture and philosophy the question remains of the extent to which Gropius's intentions for Modern architecture are reflected in his main work, and how this building was able to give shape to these "life-processes"¹ – especially those that its creator was unable to foresee. From the closure of the Hochschule für Gestaltung onwards the building's history was chequered – both in terms of its use and its life-story.

1926–1932

As well as the Bauhaus itself, the building housed the classrooms and offices for the municipal technical schools in the north wing. The Bauhaus offices were on the first level of the bridge connecting the north and south wings, and Gropius's studio was on the second. The Bauhaus workshops used the visually most striking section, which linked up with the south side.² The intermediate building adjacent to the east of the workshop wing accommodated a rehearsal stage, theatre workshops, heating equipment and a coal bunker. Stage and canteen formed its upper ground floor.

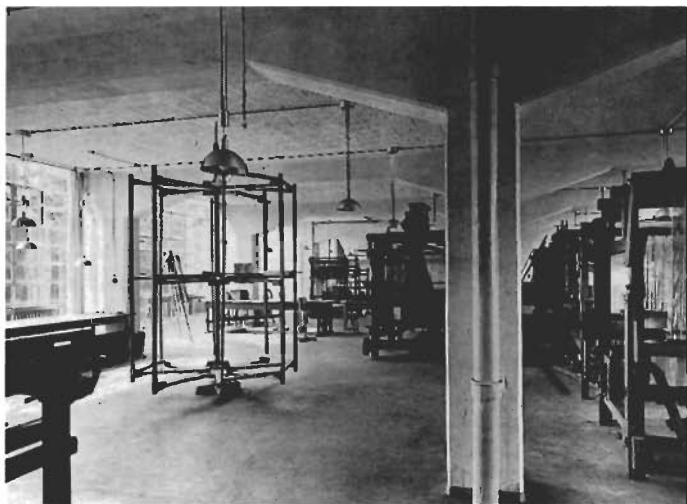
The eastern part of the complex is the studio building (Prellerhaus). It has the caretaker's flat in its cellar and seven residential studios and a small communal kitchen on each floor,³ and was intended to provide single rooms for 28 students.⁴ The first changes were made to this distribution of rooms at the beginning of the 1930/31 winter term, because pupil numbers at the vocational school were rising.⁵ Some rooms from the Bauhaus area were handed over to the "trade school".⁶ Additionally, the residential studios in the Prellerhaus were cancelled in October 1930 and made into classrooms. With the exception of the fourth floor, which remained unchanged in its room structure, the now empty studios had their intermediate walls removed to form classrooms. The building continued to be used by teachers and directors from the Bauhaus workshops.⁷

Staff common room on the top floor of the Technische Lehranstalten with wardrobes and storage for drawings. Colour design: wall-painting workshop, Hinnerk Scheper. Photograph by Erich Consemüller, 1927/28.

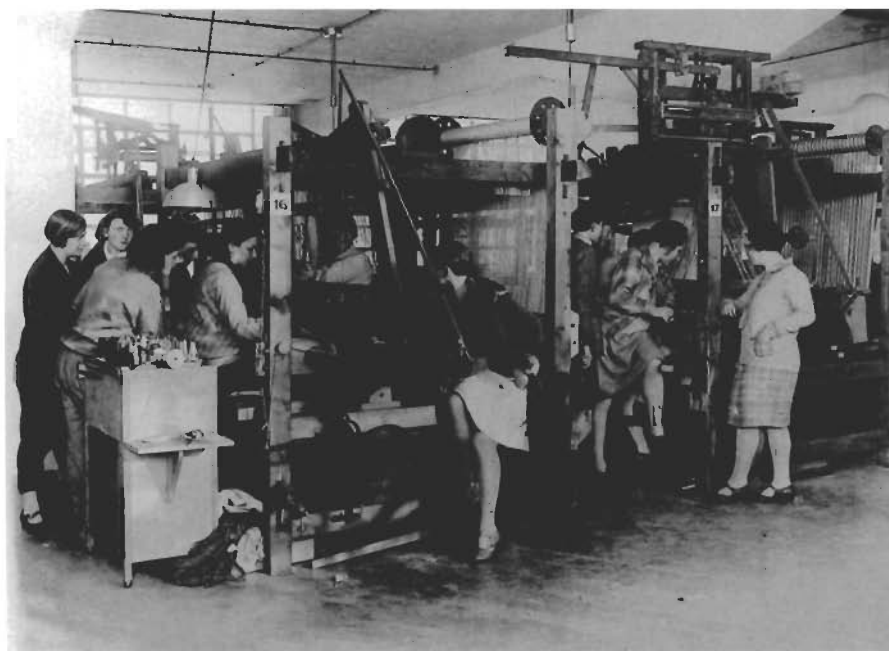
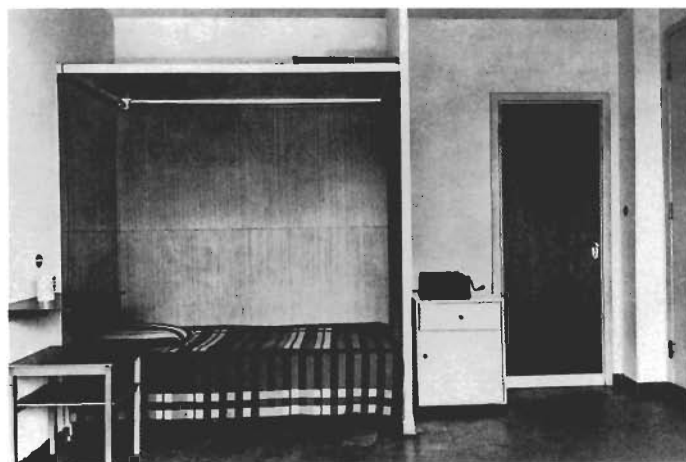
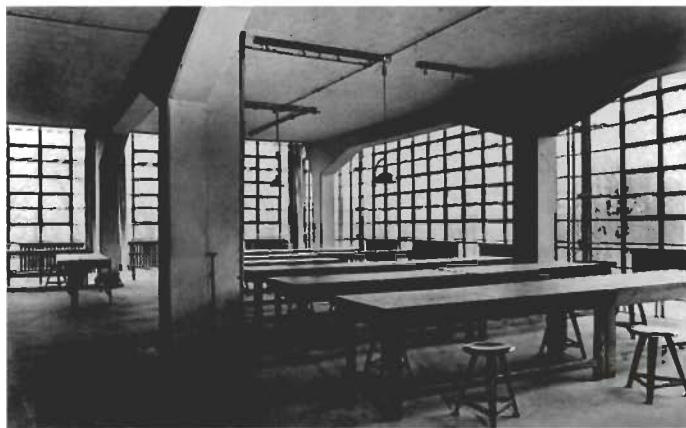


The Bauhaus students and staff reacted in quite different ways to this change. Gustav Hassenpflug, who had already left the Bauhaus, felt that the premises he remembered had at the very least been robbed of their true character by the conversion, if not actually desecrated. He wrote to Otti Berger in 1930: "I am in Dessau for a few days ... (and am compelled) to see the walls being pulled down inside the Prellerhaus and our studios being turned into terrible classrooms. It is enough to make you weep ... The liveliest idea in the Bauhaus dies with the studio building ..."⁸ But Kandinsky, who had to fight for about the real conditions of his teaching post, welcomes the improvement in his working opportunities without reservation.⁹

Weaving department on the first floor of the workshop wing. Roof drainage with fall-pipe on the inner pier. Ceilings and walls unrendered. Ceiling lights by Marianne Brandt and Hans Przyrembel. Photograph by Erich Consemüller, c. 1927.



Workroom in the workshop wing and students' living and sleeping accommodation in the studio building, photographs by Walter Peterhans, c. 1929. Workers in the weaving department on the 1st floor of the workshop wing, c. 1929.



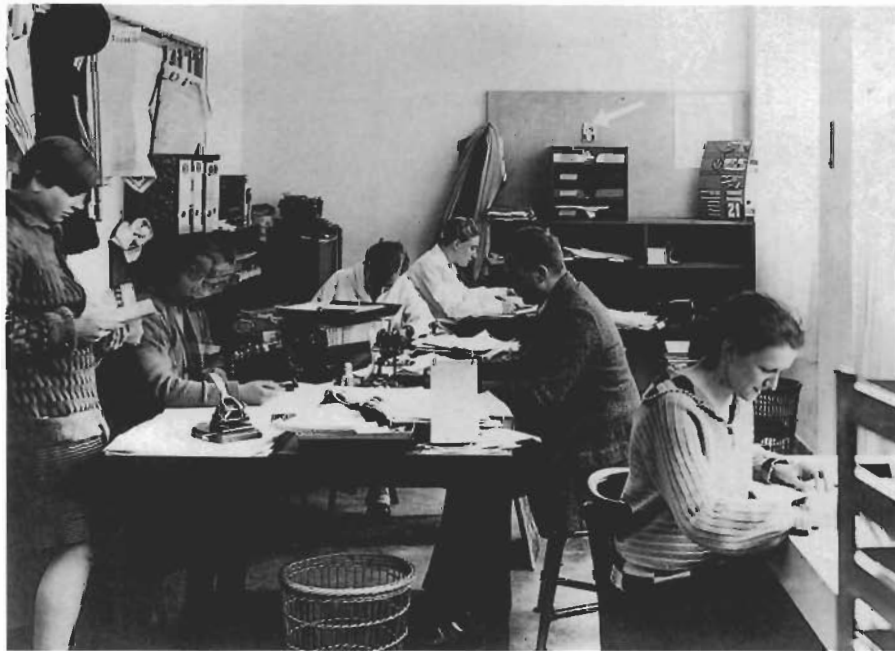
Building department workroom on the upper level of the bridge, in the background Bauhaus members Walter Kaminski, Philipp Tolziner, Helmut Schulze and Konrad Püschel, c. 1928.



Washing facilities on the ground floor of the workshop wing, photograph by Erich Consemüller, c. 1927.



Office workers on the ground floor of the studio building, c. 1929.



1932 to 1945

Responsibility for the Bauhaus building and the masters' houses was transferred to the Dessau building department in October 1932, the month in which the Bauhaus closed.¹⁰ The premises remained without a fixed tenancy for the period immediately after this. Only the north wing continued to be used as before, by the vocational school.¹¹ A whole series of public bodies applied to use the rooms that had become free immediately after the closure was announced. The Deutsche Jungenschaft suggested to the Dessau town council as early as in September 1932 that the Bauhaus building "should be preserved as a young people's centre".¹² In November of the same year the Dessau labour exchange applied for and was granted use of the former dyeworks in the cellars of the workshop wing to conduct a course for unemployed skilled builders.¹³ The Dessau youth workshops exhibited their work in the former print-shop area in December 1932.¹⁴ From March 1933 at the latest the German Engineering Association's institute of rocket technology was using rooms in the cellar of the workshop wing and later the former metal-workshop on the third floor.¹⁵ From April 1933 the state female labour institute, a training centre run by the Anhalt ministry of state in which young women and girls were taught to perform domestic tasks, took over the parts of the dyeworks formerly used by the labour exchange and parts of the first and second floor in this part of the Bauhaus. A kitchen and laundry-room and a mangling and ironing room were set up in the cellar of the workshop wing, dormitories on the first floor and laundry drying rooms on the second.¹⁶ The workshop building, intermediate building and studio building were taken over by the regional women's labour school in April.¹⁷

On 4 October of the same year the Magdeburg-Anhalt Gau school for departmental heads rented part of the workshop wing,¹⁸ and spread into the rooms that became free when the women's labour school moved out in 1938. Until the planned official training school in Klein-Rosenburg was completed, about 8000 officials for the Magdeburg-Anhalt Gau were to be trained in



Die Landesfrauen-Arbeitsschule im Bauhaus

Die Schule, die sich früher in der Steinstraße befand, ist jetzt nach dem Bauhaus übergesiedelt. Schon seit längerer Zeit ist der Bauhaus-Vertrag zwischen der Schule und dem Bauhaus geschlossen, der die Schule als moderneres Gebäude zu geben, das den Anforderungen der Zeit entspricht. Diese Verlegung des Bauhauses ist nicht die Zweckmäßigkeit.



Die Leiterin der Schule, Frau Dietrich, sitzt.

Ein Bildnis in unserem Film zeigt, daß auch in der Küche das Bauhaus seinen Geist einbringen ist, so schön wie auch die Farben des neuen Deutschland den Lebensstil haben.

Was hier gelernt wird, brauchen wir nicht zu sagen. Die Bilder sprechen davon, daß hier tüchtige Hausfrauen herauswachsen, die in der Familie spielen an der richtigen Stelle einzuwirken wissen. In jeder Beziehung wird hier die Fraulichkeit gefördert und das praktische Können unter tüchtiger Leitung erachtet. Die technische Ausbildung der Landesfrauen-Arbeitsschule findet hier ebenfalls ihren Fortgang.



the Bauhaus building. It is understandable that the needs of the school for departmental heads had priority over other institutions using the building – nevertheless there was no tenancy agreement between Dessau and the Gau training school up to March 1936.¹⁹

In early July 1938 the health insurance department of the Junkers aircraft and engine works moved into the room adjacent on the north side to the former joiners' shop on the first floor of the workshop wing, which had previously been used as a gymnasium by the regional women's labour school.²⁰ When their tenancy agreement ran out the Junkers health insurance department moved temporarily into a specially erected hut in the Bauhaus yard. In September 1939, Junkers

The Bauhaus as a women's regional training school: course members in the studio building sewing school, and doing kitchen work, between 1936/37 and 1939.

147



Das neue Heim der Landesfrauenarbeitschule: Das Bauhaus.



Im Plänkeller herrscht Hochbetrieb.



Zu den Mutterpflichten gehört auch die richtige Behandlung des Kleinkindes.



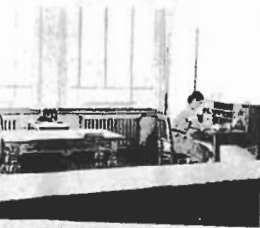
Hier wird fleißig gehäkelt.



Emig drehen sich die Räder der Nähmaschinen.



Von der Ausbildung der Turninnen.



Nach gelassener Arbeit im Wohnraum.

tection act.²⁶ Under these measures the Junkers aircraft and engine factory was responsible for the whole site on what was then Schlageterallee. The Bauhaus was treated as part of the Junkers factory and under its air-raid protection measures.²⁷ Consequently the surrounding area acquired shelter trenches. The building itself was given a coat of camouflage paint – black for the roof, and "chocolate brown" for the walls – and the windows were treated with anti-glare paint.²⁸

On 7 March 1945 the city of Dessau was the target for an air-raid. The Bauhaus was hit by an incendiary bomb that came through the ceiling of the workshop wing. The resulting fire destroyed the steel and glass façade, and thus one of the most important parts of this section of the building. The fierce heat bent the steel, which buckled.²⁹ The roof structure and supports of the north wing and the bridge were damaged. None of the original windows that had survived until then could be used any longer.³⁰



signed a new agreement about use of the Bauhaus building with Dessau, and from 1940/21 onwards converted it almost completely for their offices and research suites.²² Albert Speer's building staff also took over part of the building during this takeover, and remained there until at least May 1940.²³

At this time the Bauhaus building was used almost exclusively for educational purposes,²⁴ and during the early years of the war it was also used as temporary accommodation for the Second Company of the Local Defence Battalion.²⁵ The armed forces used the building until September 1940, and then handed it over to the Junkers factory. Because of the number of people living and working in the Bauhaus it was subject to extended self-protection measures under the air-raid pro-

1945–1965

In the post-war period early efforts were directed, understandably enough, at maintaining the buildings that were still standing. The Bauhaus was still the property of Dessau, and was intended for further public use from the outset. The director of the vocational school and his successors took over the administration of the complex immediately after they moved in. He was supported by the Dessau building department in his building and maintenance work. This arrangement was maintained until the early sixties, when the building was used exclusively as a normal school and moved into the education department's sphere of responsibility.³¹

In a first attempt to repair the building the severely damaged façade of the workshop wing was removed, with the exception of some segments on the yard side, which survived until 1976 and were used as patterns for the aluminium replica that still survives when the building was comprehensively rebuilt in the same year. The entire façade of the workshop wing was bricked up.³² Restoration work on the Bauhaus's structural framework started after a special allocation of cement and a cement injection machine in October 1945. Early in 1946 most of the classrooms were completed, and the building was gradually approved for use.

A limited company had its offices in the area formerly used by the technical school, along with sections of the municipal library, and the Prellerhaus accommodated the municipal construction department and a so-called "Aufbau GmbH".³³ The rooms were continually adapted to suit their new uses throughout these years. New classrooms were built in the cellar of the vocational school and the sanitary facilities extended. But the building was primarily used for educational purposes, housing the vocational school and the Friedrichs-, Antoinetten-, Goethe and Rosa-Luxemburg-Schule.

Even though the internal conversion for teaching purposes was not yet complete,³⁴ the building was fully occupied by 1949.³⁵ The vocational school used the north wing, as in the period before 1945,³⁶ along with an educational training

establishment for kindergarten teachers,³⁷ and a trade school for the construction of heavy machinery. The studio building, intermediate building and workshop wing were used by the Dessau building combine from 1963 at the latest, the trade organization (Handelsorganisation – HO) and a medical school. In the course of this change of use the Breuer seating was removed from the hall, which was divided up into laboratories for physics and chemistry. The former joiners' shop on the upper ground floor of the workshop wing was used as a gymnasium.

This use structure persisted until the mid sixties. Then all the temporarily accommodated institutions left the building, and the whole complex was used for trade or vocational schools, with the exception of a few special or evening courses. There is evidence that the Bauhaus was occupied by the trade school, the professional training school for the Halle-Nord housing combine, a publicly owned company (VEB), and by the mercantile and medical schools. Other temporary users were the Dessau adult education centre and various companies' evening schools.³⁸

The first work on the exterior started between 1955 and 1958. The façade of the studio building was repaired,³⁹ and the brick façade of the workshop wing acquired continuous bands of windows.⁴⁰ But until the early sixties the building was not the subject of conceptual considerations. It was only then that the first moves were taken to recognizing the building's value as a monument, put in train by the Ministry of Culture, the GDR Monument Preservation authority, the Federation of German Architects (GDR), the German Building Academy and the Dessau town council.⁴¹ The Bauhaus building was now classed as a progressive and significant building.⁴² In June 1964 the GDR minister of culture, Hans Bentzien, received a plan for rebuilding the Bauhaus from the Dessau building department and judged it to be "economically acceptable".⁴³ But on 21 December 1964 came an announcement that no rebuilding funds could be made available for the following year. In January 1965 it was considered "not opportune at the moment" to put the building on the "list of inter-

nationally significant buildings maintained centrally".⁴⁴

At about the same time the Dessau municipal building department and the Weimar college of architecture and building jointly carried out a first survey of the building and assessment of its status for protection as a monument. This project, directed by Konrad Püschel, was carried out from June to August 1964 and included making a record of the ground plans of all floors, documentation of the façades, the external facilities and other elements of the building that were considered important, like windows, doors, cupboards and lighting.⁴⁵ In the preliminary stages of this project the Bauhaus was included in the "number 1 list of buildings significant as monuments in the GDR" and restoration to its original form was fixed "for 1967 at the latest".⁴⁶

1965-1976

Until the comprehensive reconstruction in 1976 the use of the Bauhaus was relatively untouched by the more or less violent clashes between those immediately responsible and the authorities, from the local level upwards. The directors of the vocational school regularly complained about the technical inadequacies of the building and demanded the necessary restoration measures. Until late in 1966 the director of the trade school was responsible for the administration of the building; he had to be the "administrator of the Bauhaus", as a kind of second job. It was not until January 1967 that the job of Bauhaus administrator became full-time.⁴⁷

In terms of local responsibility, the central school administration (ZSV) was in charge of the Bauhaus building. In 1971 there were differences of opinion about this between the ZSV and the town council's new department of professional training and careers advice.⁴⁸ A compromise was agreed that the ZSV should continue to administer the building, but financial planning was to be the responsibility of the professional training department.⁴⁹

Apart from a short interlude as an auxiliary hospital in 1969,⁵⁰ the complex settled down into four main areas in the late sixties.⁵¹ The

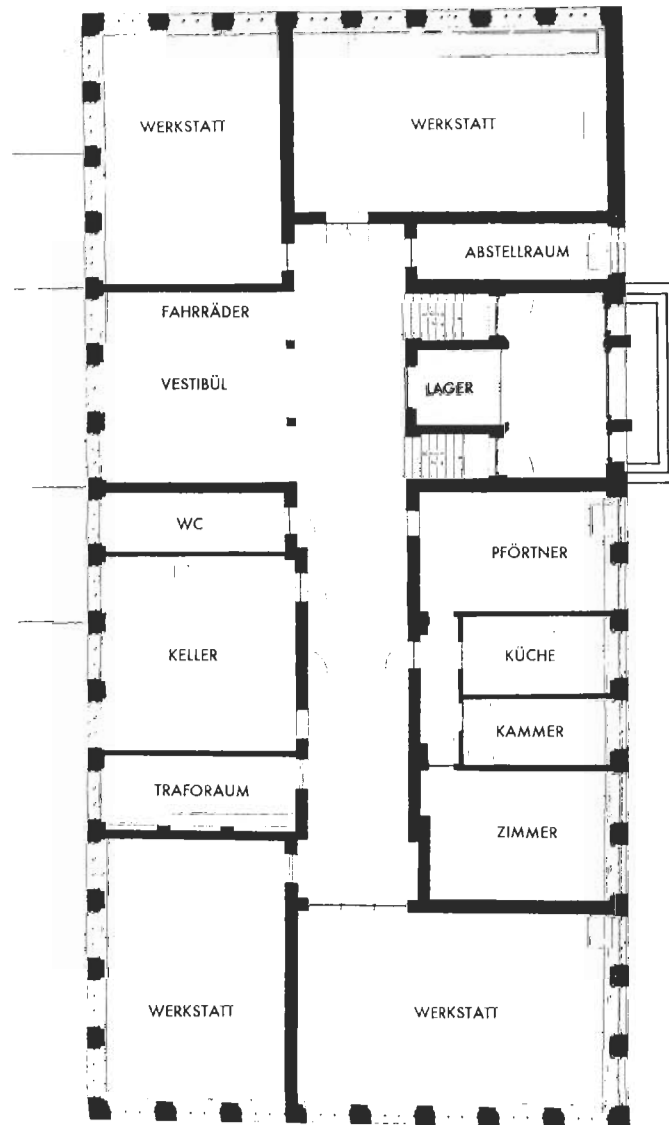


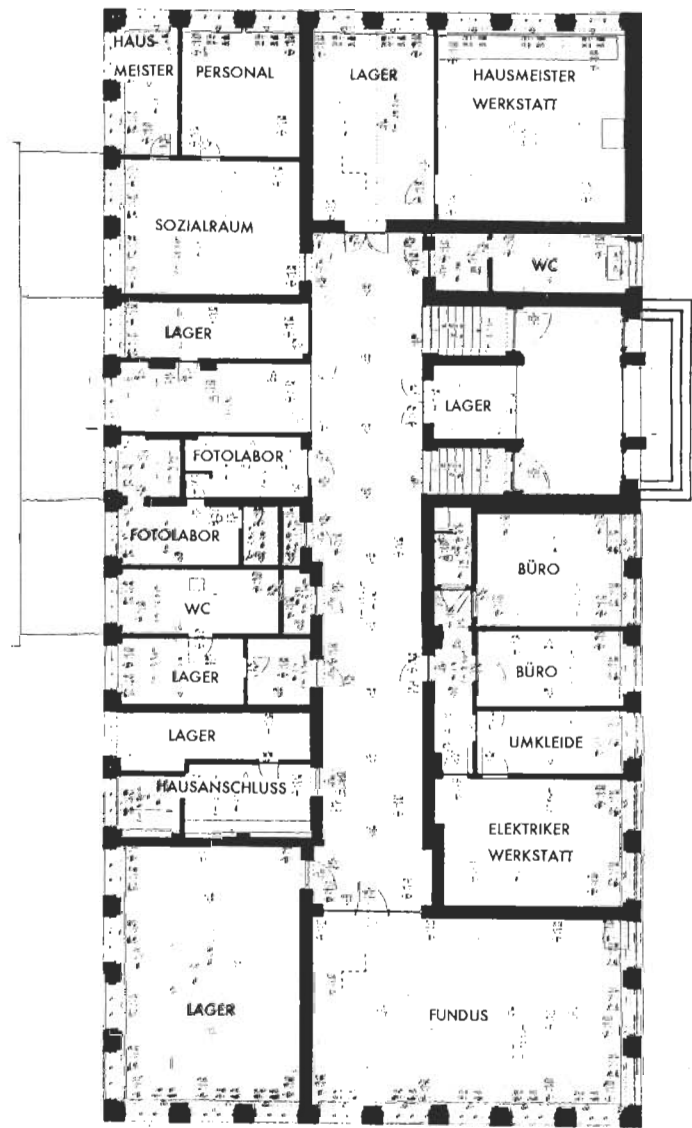
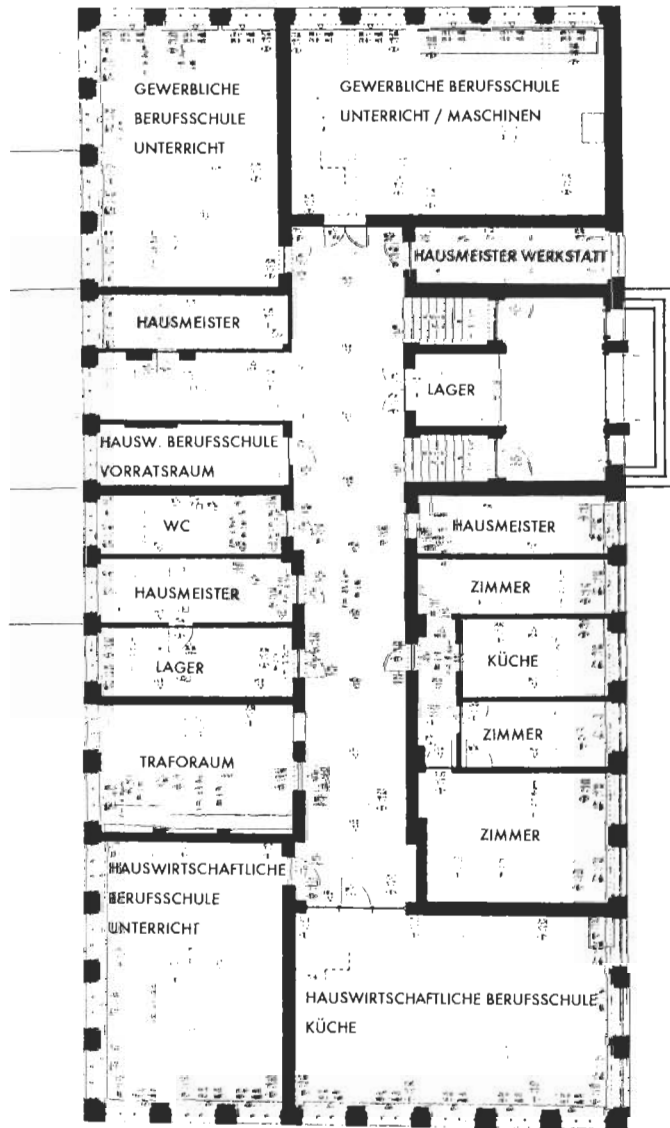
first, the trade school, included the gym room on the ground floor of the workshop wing and the rooms on the second and third floors. The business school occupied most of the Prellerhaus and some of the rooms that had been created in the hall. The medical school used the rooms in the workshop wing not occupied by the trade school. The housing combine and its training school laid claim to the first and second floor of the north wing and the cellar in the intermediate building. Other institutions accommodated in the building were the educational institute, the heavy machinery engineering school and the central auxiliary vocational schools.

1976-1989

In 1976 the Bauhaus's external appearance was restored for the first time since it was bombed. A working party called "Bauhaus Dessau – preparation for the 50th anniversary" was formed in July 1975, which was finally used as a co-ordinating organ for the rebuilding measures.⁵² In April 1976 the crucial decisions were then made by the Central Committee of SED and the GDR Council of Ministers about "preparation and execution of the Bauhaus rebuilding measures."

The first phase concentrated on restoring the building's outward appearance and its most striking rooms, then further reconstruction phases focused largely on the electrical and sanitary installations. Decisions about the further use of the Bauhaus were also taken in parallel with the first rebuilding measures. The Bauhaus administra-

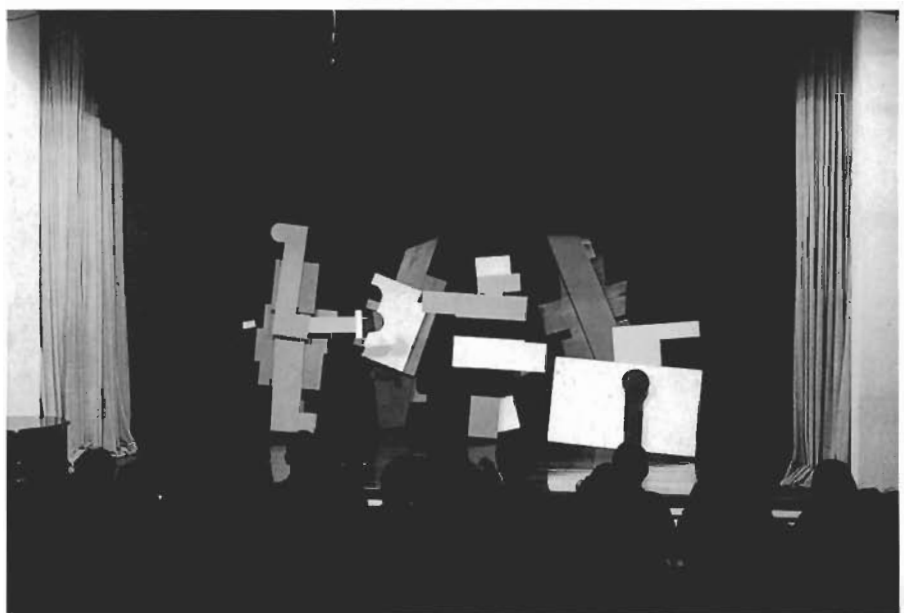




„Bauhaus 1919–1933“ exhibition of the
Collection, 1986–88.

Theater der Klänge, Düsseldorf, performing “Mechanisches Ballett” by Joost Schmidt
on the Bauhaus stage, 7–9 October 1988. Choreography: Jörg Lensing,
composition: Hanno Spelsberg, photograph: Armin Herrmann, Berlin.

152





tion took over succession from the ZSV, commissioned by the Dessau council vocational training and careers advice department with effect from 5 January 1976.⁵³ After being rebuilt, the building was used by the above-mentioned vocational and specialist schools.

In April 1976 the GDR Council of Ministers decided to set up an "Academic and Cultural Bauhaus Centre" (WKZ).⁵⁴ Its role, culturally broad but at first somewhat undefined, concentrated on setting up a Bauhaus collection and building up an archive on the history of the Bauhaus. There was a lack of public decisiveness about what was to be done with the new institution, especially as it had been accommodated in a building surrounded by so many expectations. The shell of the new institution was not yet "functional" – it was still lacking an actual function. In 1986 the Bauhaus, a legal, judicial corporate body, was subordinated directly to the Ministry of Building as an institution.

The new institution, now called the Bauhaus Educational Centre, was divided into three areas: public relations work, architecture and town planning, product/environmental design, collection/archive. A Bauhaus board of trustees was appointed, which was responsible for running the Bauhaus and appointing a director.

According to the new statute the Bauhaus's work was to deal with developments in architecture, town planning and design, and to promote research, education and the international exchange of ideas, work that logically led to setting up various "Walter Gropius seminars".

Kitchen, view in the direction of the refectory, celebration area.

Celebration area in the intermediate section: view from the refectory across the stage into the hall.

Seating in the celebration area (hall, stage).



Workshop wing, 1st floor, view of the "transparent corner".

Workshop wing, 1st floor, workshop.

Workshop wing, Akademie department workroom.

155





Fachhochschule seminar rooms, room 114.
Living and sleeping accommodation in the studio building.
"Club" in the basement of the workshop wing.



157



- 1 Walter Gropius, *Bauhausbauten Dessau* (1930), Reprint Mainz, Berlin 1974, p. 11f.
- 2 op. cit. note 1, p. 14.
- 3 The residential studios were 5.17 x 4.5 m and had a sleeping-niche, corner kitchen, two built-in cupboards and washing facilities. Cf. op. cit. note 1, p. 41.
- 4 24 single rooms were proposed in the preliminary discussions. Cf. Stadtarchiv Dessau (Dessau municipal archive), quoted below as SAD, SB/1-15 f. Finally seven residential studios were built on each of four floors.
- 5 The Gewerbliche Berufsschule (Vocational school) had already moved into its wing of the Bauhaus in 1926, with about 1400 pupils. Cf. SAD, SB/1-113 ff. The numbers had increased again by 1930. Cf. Director of the Gewerbliche Berufsschule Dessau, letter to Rat der Stadt Dessau (town council), Dessau, 11 September 1930, SAD, SB/3-10, 11.
- 6 The Bauhaus put the library (1st floor), classroom no. 75 (2nd floor) at the disposal of the Gewerbliche Berufsschule, and also a stoker's flat and storage space in the cellar. SAD, SB/3-15 f.
- 7 SAD, SB/3-111.
- 8 Gustav Hassenpflug, letter to Otti Berger, Dessau, 22 October 1930, in: Peter Hahn (ed.), *Bauhaus Berlin: Auflösung Dessau 1932, Schließung Berlin 1933, Bauhäusler und Drittes Reich*, Weingarten 1985, p. 26.
- 9 Kandinsky and his painting class had been allotted one of the new classrooms. Cf. Wassily Kandinsky, letter to Werner Drewes, 15 March 1931, in: Hahn, op. cit. note 8, p. 27.
- 10 The transfer took place on 28 October 1932.
- 11 Director of the Gewerbliche Berufsschule, letter to the Mayor of Dessau, Dessau, 3 July 1937, SAD, SB/5-106.
- 12 Deutsche Jungenschaft, letter to Dessau town council, Dessau, 22 September 1932, SAD, SB/41.
- 13 Minutes of the Dessau finance committee meeting, Dessau, 17 November 1932, SAD, SB/3-183, 187.
- 14 Jugend-Werkstätten Dessau, letter to Dessau town council, Dessau, 9 December 1932, SAD, SB/41.
- 15 The institute worked in the Bauhaus until June 1933. It was abolished on 12 June 1933. SAD, SB/3-226.
- 16 SAD, SB/3-190.
- 17 The Landesfrauen-Arbeitsschule moved in on 29 July 1933. *Anhalter Anzeiger*, no. 176, 29 July 1933. A tenancy agreement was not drawn up until August of the same year. SAD, SB/4-194 ff.
- 18 *Anhalter Anzeiger*, no. 233, 4 October 1933.
- 19 Cf.: agreement between Stadtgemeinde Dessau (local authority) and the Anhaltischer Landesfiskus, Abteilung Volksbildung, Dessau, 1 September 1934, SAD, SB/4-194 ff. Part of the Landesfrauen-Arbeitsschule still appeared on the statement of costs in 1940, along with the Junkers factory, the Gauführerschule and the Gewerbliche Berufsschule. SAD, SB/6-131.
- 20 Junkers Flugzeug- und Motorenwerke AG Dessau, letter to the Anhaltisches Staatsministerium, Dessau, 30 June 1938. SAD, SB/6-31.
- 21 The Chief of Police, letter to the Werklufschutz-Ortsvertrauensstelle of the Reichsgruppe Industrie, Dessau, 11 September 1940, SAD, SB/6-121.
- 22 There were about 400 Junkers workers in the Bauhaus in 1940. SAD, NZ 101; SAD, SB/6-121.
- 23 SAD, SB/6-116, 200.
- 24 Stadtbauverwaltung Dessau, memo to the Dessau town architect, Dessau, 8 February 1940, SAD, SB/6-152.
- 25 SAD, SB/6-119. The Chief of Police, letter to the Werklufschutz-Ortsvertrauensstelle of the Reichsgruppe Industrie, Dessau, 11 September 1940. SAD, SB/6-121.
- 26 The Luftschutzgesetz, version of 8 September 1939, required all public bodies to arrange their own air-raid protection measures.
- 27 The Chief of Police, letter to the Werklufschutz-Ortsvertrauensstelle of the Reichsgruppe Industrie, Dessau, 11 September 1940, SAD, SB/6-121.
- 28 SAD, SB/6-211. The paint was applied between July und October 1941. SAD, SB/6-247 ff.
- 29 Christine Kutschke, *Bauhausbauten der Dessauer Zeit: Ein Beitrag zu ihrer Dokumentation und Wertung*. Unpublished dissertation, Hochschule für Architektur und Bauwesen, Weimar 1981, p. 26. The author is probably referring to a letter, probably dating from 1948, from Hubert Hoffmann to Walter Gropius, in which Gropius provided information about the condition of the Bauhaus building.
- 30 Stadtbauamt, construction dept., letter to the Town architect, Dessau, 3 December 1945, SAD, SB/65, and instructions for placing a timber roof on the existing solid roof of the north wing and the intermediate building of the Dessau Bauhaus by Otto Fiedler, Dessau, 29 April 1948, SAD, SB/66.
- 31 Bauhaus office, filed note, Dessau, 27 January 1976, Stiftung Bauhaus Dessau, Archiv der Sammlung.
- 32 Mayor Fritz Hesse, letter to the Deutsche Zentralverwaltung für Volksbildung in der sowjetischen Besatzungszone, Dessau, 30 October 1945, SAD, SB/62-41.
- 33 Raumplan (use of space) in the Dessau Bauhaus, SAD, SB/8. Description of conversion work in the basement of the Dessau Bauhaus, Dessau, 21 March 1949. SAD, SB/66.
- 34 Hochbauamt Dessau, report to the Dessau town council, Dessau, 18 January 1949, SAD, SB/65.
- 35 From the 1955 to 1964 budget plans, Stiftung Bauhaus Dessau, Archiv der Sammlung, EA/73-18 ff, 53 ff; Stiftung Bauhaus Dessau, Archiv der Sammlung, EA/75-88 ff, 126 ff, 156 ff.
- 36 The names Gewerbliche Berufsschule and Kommunale Berufsschule are used synonymously in these and subsequent years for one and the same institution. The way in which the building is occupied is listed in a letter from the Gewerbliche Berufsschule to Dessau town council, Dept. of vocational training and advice, 12 October 1972, Stiftung Bauhaus Dessau, Archiv der Sammlung, EA/105.
- 37 Extended to the Pädagogisches Institut from 1963.
- 38 Listed in a concept for the rebuilding of the Dessau Bauhaus, 20 June 1964, SAD, SB/68-19 ff.
- 39 Bauhaus office, filed note, Dessau, 27 January 1976, Stiftung Bauhaus Dessau, Archiv der Sammlung, EA/105-18.
- 40 This building work is dated differently in the specialist literature. Christine Kutschke dates it to 1965, op. cit. note 29. Cf. Christine Engelmann/Christian Schädlich, *Die Bauhausbauten in Dessau*, Berlin 1991, p. 29. The period 1955-58 is mentioned in a Bauhaus office filed note dated 27 January 1976. Stiftung Bauhaus Dessau, Archiv der Sammlung, EA/105-18.

- 41 Minutes of a site inspection in the Dessau Bauhaus, 11 October 1962, SAD, SB/68.
- 42 Monument within the meaning of the Monument Care and Preservation Order of 28 September 1961, Gesetzblatt II (DDR), page 475, October 1961.
- 43 Dessau town council, Stadtbauamt, document entry Schlesier, Dessau, 30 September 1964, SAD, SB/68-46 f.
- 44 Minutes of a discussion on the rebuilding of the Bauhaus on 23 January 1965, Dessau, undated, SAD, SB/349-19 f.
- 45 Konrad Püschel, final report on trainee students in the Stadtbauamt Dessau, Weimar, 5 August 1964, SAD, SB/68-40 ff.
- 46 It was accepted on 29 May 1965. Stadtbauamt Dessau, document entry, Dessau, 10 June 1964, SAD, SB/70-17.
- 47 Minutes of a discussion by the directors of the vocational schools in the Bauhaus with the Abteilung Volksbildung about running the Bauhaus, Dessau, 17 January 1967, Stiftung Bauhaus Dessau, Archiv der Sammlung, EA/105.
- 48 Bauhaus office, letter to the Zentrale Schulverwaltung, 15 December 1970, Archiv Bauhaus Dessau, EA/105. The question of responsibility for the Bauhaus building remained unclear well into March 1971. The Abteilung Berufsbildung und Berufsberatung cited a directive from the Mayoress dated 5 January 1971; the Zentrale Schulverwaltung quoted a decree by the Stadtverordnetenversammlung dated 19 January 1971. Minutes of the Bauhaus site inspection on 24 March 1971, Stiftung Bauhaus Dessau, Archiv der Sammlung, EA/105-1 ff.
- 49 Bauhaus office, filed note, Dessau, 27 January 1976, Stiftung Bauhaus Dessau, Archiv der Sammlung, EA/105-18.
- 50 The auxiliary hospital was accommodated in the GBS wing and was abolished on 30 May 1969. Town council, Abteilung Volksbildung, Zentrale Schulverwaltung, filed note dated 30 May 1969, Stiftung Bauhaus Dessau, Archiv der Sammlung, EA/105.
- 51 The list below is definitive for the years 1970-71, but can be considered reliable for the full period under discussion. Changed names for individual institutions are ignored. Bauhaus office, letter to Dessau town council, Dessau, 26 October 1970, Stiftung Bauhaus Dessau, Archiv der Sammlung, EA/105. Bauhaus office, filed note on an inspection on 23 May 1973, Stiftung Bauhaus Dessau, Archiv der Sammlung, EA/105-17 ff; Bauhaus office, note to the Zentrale Schulverwaltung, Dessau, 15 November 1972, Stiftung Bauhaus Dessau, Archiv der Sammlung, EA/105; Bauhaus office, filed note on an inspection on 23 May 1973, Stiftung Bauhaus Dessau, Archiv der Sammlung, EA/105-17 ff.
- 52 The working party consisted of the Mayoress, the Town Building Director, the Town Architect and representatives of the Monument Preservation Office and the Stadtarchiv Dessau. Minutes on the constitution of the "Bauhaus Dessau – Vorbereitung des 50. Jahrestages" (preparations for the 50th anniversary) working party, Dessau, 9 July 1975, SAD, SB/70.
- 53 Dessau town council, Abteilung Volksbildung, letter to the Volkseigener Betrieb, Hauptauftraggeber Rekonstruktion, Dessau, 22 January 1976, Stiftung Bauhaus Dessau, Archiv der Sammlung, EA/106-163.
- 54 The Dessau town council made its decision on the Wissenschaftlich-Kulturelles Zentrum on 30 November 1977, based on ministerial resolution no. 183/3/76. Draft resolution no. 174 for Dessau Town Council, Dessau, 30 November 1977, Stiftung Bauhaus Dessau, Archiv der Sammlung, EA/45-202.

Wolfgang Paul
Renovation 1976



The renovation of the Bauhaus in 1976 – called reconstruction at the time – was a completely new kind of monument preservation process for all concerned. There was scarcely any previous experience with Modern buildings in this field. Walter Gropius's Fagus factory at Alfeld an der Leine, dating from as early as 1911, and the Werkbund's Weißenhof housing estate near Stuttgart were not to be renovated until after the Bauhaus. Thus work in the Bauhaus in 1976 involved constant searching and experimentation to find the correct solution for a monument of Modern architecture.

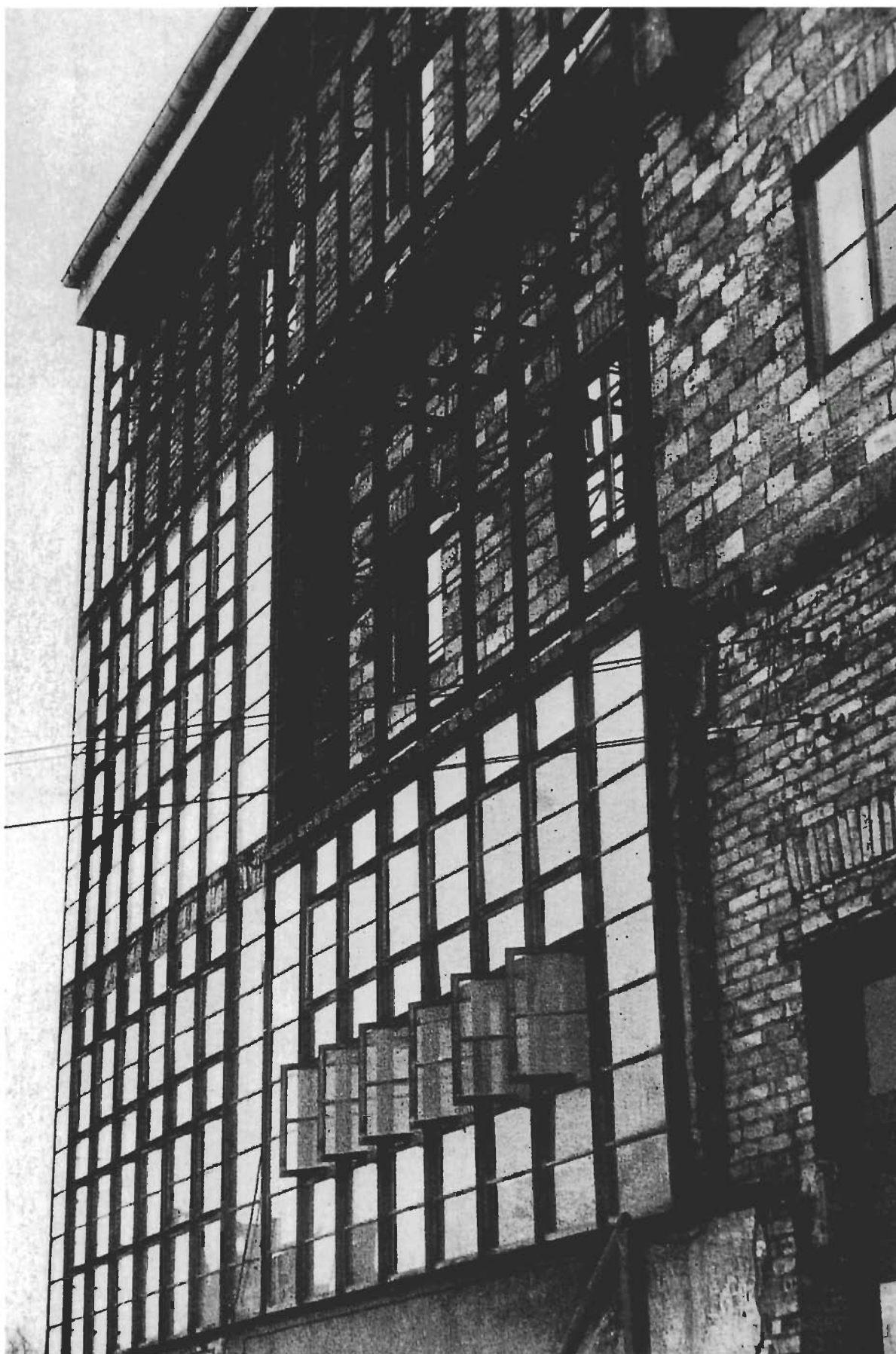
The Bauhaus building had been badly damaged in the Second World War. The steel and glass curtain façade of the workshop wing had suffered particularly, but the support structure of this part of the building had survived. Various modifications and additions were made so that this section could be used after the end of the war. However, it was also at about this time that an agreement was reached between the Dessau municipal building department and the Weimar Hochschule für Architektur und Bauwesen that the Bauhaus building should be surveyed, a record made, and that an inventory should be made of all the surviving exhibition pieces. Work began in summer 1964, under the direction of former Bauhaus student Konrad Püschel, who was a lecturer at the college in Weimar. Püschel had started at the Bauhaus while it was still under construction and graduated in 1930 with Bauhaus diploma no. 22. Five students worked on the building from June to August 1964, each supervised by an assistant at the college and an employee of the municipal building department's town planning group. The former clerk of works on the building, the architect Sturtzkopf, agreed to be an advisor on the project. The documents that this would generate were intended as the key to the renovation of the Bauhaus that was already planned at the time. And the foreword to the completed survey did indeed say: "The aim in reconstructing the Bauhaus is to recreate the original structural condition for the exterior design of the building and the most important communal facilities, while retaining its present use. Essential-

ly these measures are the first general repairs to a building that is about 40 years old."

At the same time there was an attempt in Dessau, in a period in which the Bauhaus had found favour, to found a group of friends of the Bauhaus again, intended to promote and keep alive the ideas of the former artistic institution in the town. But this surge of optimism was to be short-lived. Another ten years had to pass before a start could be made on renovating the building, even though there was an increasing number of attempts in the town to popularize the Bauhaus's ideas. Former municipal archivist Hans Harsen, who had been a Friend of the Bauhaus in the twenties, persuaded the Staatliche Galerie Schloß Georgium to mount the first Bauhaus exhibition in the former German Democratic Republic, and he also helped with the arrangements. The exhibition was called *Moderne Formgestaltung – Das fortschrittliche Erbe des Bauhauses* (Modern design – the progressive legacy of the Bauhaus), and showed graphics, painting, pottery, furniture and also architectural designs. Despite its success the exhibition did not help the Bauhaus towards its renovation. The urgently needed measures were shelved again.

It was not possible to start preparing to renovate the Bauhaus until 1975. This was because the building was due to celebrate its 50th anniversary in the following year. Now there was only a very short time available for preparing all the necessary documents for an early start on the first part of the renovation, due to be completed by 4 December 1976. The planned measures concerned above all the roof, the exterior rendering and painting the workshops, vocational school wing, bridge and stage area. The studio building was excepted from all this work. Other work included rebuilding the curtain façade and restoring the area used for celebrations, which included porch, vestibule, exhibition gallery, hall, stage and canteen.

After the first basic discussions in summer 1975, it was to take until the autumn to make a start on planning. This had to be completed within a very few months, as building was due to start in 1976. Building measures had to be checked,



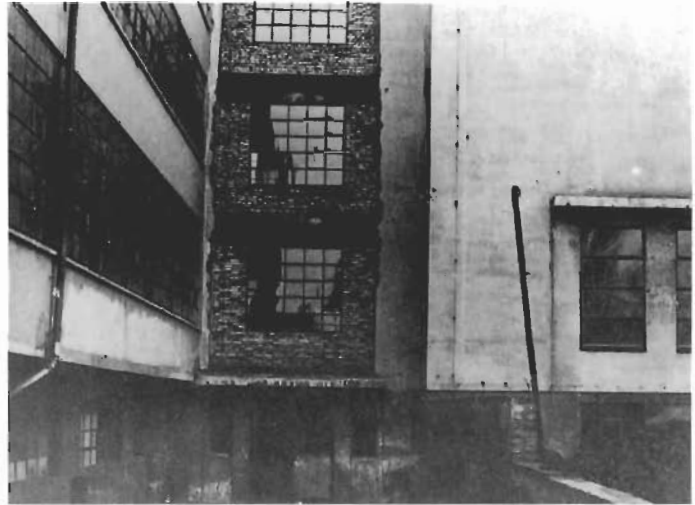
West and east view with the bridge, south-east view, condition in the mid-1960s.



Foyer window and main staircase looking south, condition in September 1975.

South extension to the workshop wing with considerable damp damage, condition early in 1976.

Workshop wing, south-east view, condition in the mid-1960s.



solutions found for structural details and monument preservation problems discussed. Dr. hc. Hans Berger, the chief conservator of the former districts of Halle and Magdeburg, now Sachsen-Anhalt, was a constant presence, and advised all those involved. As time was so short, planning ran in tandem with the actual building works after they started. Further difficulty was caused by the fact that with so little time available it was hardly possible to evaluate the literature comprehensively, and anyway very little of it was available to those involved.

The Dessau-based Volkseigener Betrieb Industrieprojektierung (state-owned industrial projects company) was commissioned to draw up all the necessary plans. However, there were as yet no documents available for the stage area. To provide some theoretical framework for this, two students at the Weimar college did their practical work on this subject in the office of the Dessau town architect. These months also saw an intensive examination of the idea of rebuilding the façade, as new suggestions for the articulation of the windows had to be addressed. There were many people who thought that it did not make sense to rebuild the original close-meshed pattern. But finally the opinion prevailed that after its renovation, including the reconstruction of the curtain façade, the Bauhaus should be a record of its architect's achievement in 1926, and not, for example, something that Walter Gropius might have achieved with the resources, opportunities and ideas of 1976.

Actual work on renovating the building then really did start in March 1976, so that there were only nine months available in which to complete it. Reconstructing the façade was the prime concern. Assembling this on time determined the course of the other work to a large extent. The first requirement was that the original roof drainage system should be reconstructed inside the building. So the first thing to be removed was the timber roof that drained to the outside. New pipes to the municipal sewerage system were laid at the same time as the building's internal drainage was dealt with.

It turned out that the slope on the original roof was at the most one per cent. This was

certainly one of the reasons – along with the then not fully developed roof structure using torfoleum tiles – for the damage that occurred to the roof at a relatively early stage. To solve this problem, the new roof was given a minimum slope of 2.5 per cent. As the original statical calculations for the roof were not available, polystyrene sheets were now used so that the weight of the sloping layers, which were now thicker, should not be unduly increased. To avoid strain caused by temperature changes these sheets were provided with ventilation slits. The thicker sloping layers also meant that the cornice had to be raised. A ring of reinforced concrete about 20 cm high was fitted on top of all the exterior walls. When this work was complete it was possible to start rebuilding the curtain façade.

A precise examination of a minute remainder of the original façade that was still to be found on the east side of the workshop building, provided the necessary information for this. It had been suggested that aluminium could be used instead of steel to rebuild this curtain wall, to reduce regular maintenance costs considerably because it was possible to anodize this material almost black. To retain the original effect of the façade, it was necessary for the new construction profiles to have the same dimensions as the former steel profiles, and that no changes were made to the size of the panes. Calculations in the structural analysis showed that an aluminium façade in the dimensions of the former steel structure would have been possible. After this all concerned started to develop appropriate profiles. This problem was solved satisfactorily and quickly, so there was nothing to prevent the drawing of these profiles, a process for which special tools had to be created. A suggestion that thermopane glass should be used for the curtain façade was dropped because this would have meant enlarging the depth of the profiles considerably, thus severely detracting from the transparency of the façade. Another idea that was also rejected for reasons of monument preservation was the use of coated glass to absorb some of the solar radiation; the planners returned to the plate glass that had previously been used.

Building team in 1976. The photograph was discovered in 1998 during demolition of a non-original wall erected in 1976 in the cellars of the former Technische Gewerbeschule.
Roof renewal, fitting the roofing-felt, with students from the Hochschule für Architektur und Bauwesen Weimar, June 1976.
Removed window façade in the workshop wing, summer 1976.



Panel listing firms involved in the first renovation phase and progress in terms of timing.
Workshop wing, south-west view with entrance and staircase, condition in the mid-1960s.

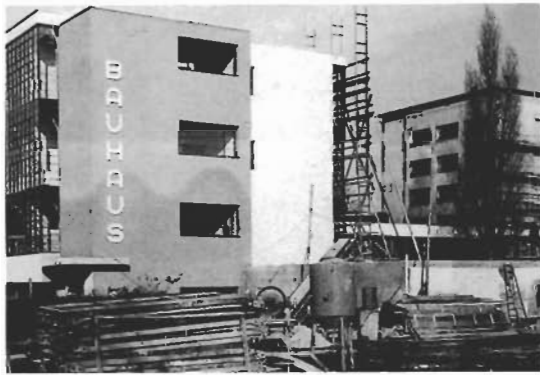
Sozialistischer Wettbewerb in Auswertung d. IX. Parteitages d. SED
Reko Bauhaus 1. Etappe 1976
Verpflichtung der Baustellenkollektive: 1. Übergabe GBS, Brücke, Werkstattgebäude. Fassaden und Dächer
2. Wiederherstellung Aula, Nebenräume bis 15.11.76

Betrieb/Kollektiv	Leistung	Endtermin	Aug.	Sept.	Oktober	Nov.
VEB Bau Dessau (HAN)	Bauaufstellung GBS	15.11.76	51	48,8	63	63
VEB Bauproduktions Dessau	Bauaufstellung Aula, Nebenräume	7.10.76	38	36,9	64	64,2
VEB Bauproduktions Dessau	Dacharbeiten 1. Aula Bauteile	30.8.76	70	70	100	100
VEB Bauproduktions Dessau	Leistung Fassadenarbeiten	20.9.76	16	18	64	64
VEB Bauproduktions Dessau	Montage Fassadenarbeiten	15.10.76	15	18	50	50
PGH Dornum Dessau	Glasarbeiten	30.10.76	10	10	29,5	66
PGH L. Ma. Dessau	Malerarbeiten	10.11.76	10	37	32,3	64
VEB Holzverarbeitung Dessau	Tischlerarbeiten	5.9.76	40	92	42	100
VEB Holzverarbeitung Dessau	Kunststoffsarbeiten	29.8.76	100	100	100	100
PGH Einheit Dessau	Dachdämmung, Sturz Installationen	31.10.76	51	51	55	55
PGH L. Anlagentechnik Dessau	E-Installationen	10.11.76	20	20	44	44,3
Fa. Obericht Dessau	Schlosserarbeiten	31.10.76	21	22	44	55
PGH 10. Jahrestag Dessau	Fliesenarbeiten	31.10.76	24	78	50	60
VEB Bauproduktions Dessau	Fliesenarbeiten	30.9.76	100	100	100	100
Hochschule für Architektur Weimar - Studentenkollektiv	Abbruch- u. Schichtarbeiten	6.11.76	60	101	100	100

Bestes Kollektiv: Betrieb: PGH L. Ma. Bestes des Monats: Betrieb: Koll. A. Schöne



Work at and below ground level, late summer 1976.
The BAUHAUS lettering is refitted to the south gable
of the workshop wing, October 1976.



Vestibule with staircase and hall entrance, damaged condition at the start of renovation.
Vestibule on 4 December 1976.



Some original parts of the mechanism for opening the groups of windows made it possible to reconstruct these for the whole façade. Rods, spindle, gear-wheel and chain are the necessary components if a row of windows is to be opened simultaneously or closed firmly. The remaining areas of wall were given a new felted fair-faced rendering, on to which several coats of white multi-colour paint were sprayed. Several trials were carried out in order to reconstruct the fine-grained grey-blue scraped rendering for the base and south gable of the workshop building; the trial surfaces were then compared to check grain and colour with the fractured edges and backs of pieces of the original rendering that had been chipped off, before the actual work could start. The visible surfaces of the vocational school, bridge and intermediate building were returned to their original condition by means of partially renewing the rendering and applying paint.

Repairing the surfaces of the bridge substructure posed a problem. The niggled concrete surface of supports and cross-members was badly damaged in some places. The iron inlays had become visible and were thus starting to corrode. Putting the niggling on to new concrete cladding would have loosened the latter, and so a solution was sought and found in applying a fine-grained wash of gravel rendering. This produced a crystalline appearance that was close to the original.

Restoring the former stage section to its original condition was another key feature of work on the Bauhaus building. This work was made possible by stripping out the gym and classroom accommodation housed there and the provision of a new replacement building for the gym. The original sequence of rooms in the stage area included the stage itself, the hall and the canteen on one side of the vestibule and the exhibition gallery on the other. An entrance to the former ground-floor workshops was used to create a cloakroom giving directly on to the vestibule. It was also possible to reach the new lecture-room from here.

The core of this area is the hall and adjacent stage. Opening the folding screen at the rear of the stage made it possible to watch what

was happening on the stage from the canteen as well, which made quite new demands on the artists appearing. It is therefore not surprising that particular care was taken when rebuilding the hall. The tubular steel seating, the lighting and necessary technical features like radiators and window-opening mechanisms were all adapted to the masterly proportions of the hall. A sophisticated colour scheme gave the whole thing a festive atmosphere. After partition walls that had been added later were stripped out work started in the hall-stage-canteen sequence of rooms. In parallel with the renewal of the rendering, a start was made on reconstructing the mechanism for opening all the sections in the groups of two or three windows at the same time. A single handwheel – placed on every third wall pillar – indicates the technical installations inside the pillar, which transfer energy to a spindle running through three window apertures, to which the wings of those windows are attached by rods. The device used for blacking the room out was also renewed at this time. Here too it was necessary to rebuilt the technical equipment in its clear form, subordinated to the whole, though the original hand control was replaced by an electrical device.

The lighting system, designed similarly for hall and vestibule by Bauhaus student Max Krajewski, raised particular problems during reconstruction. These were not just concerned with manufacturing the necessary chromium-plated steel tubes in different thicknesses, and sometimes curved, and in getting hold of filament soffits that emitted a warm, pleasant light, but also in restoring the ducting that was still present in the reinforced concrete beams and in precise assembling of the individual elements.

A photograph from the original period, approximately showing the original proportions, was available for the reconstruction of the hall seating created by Marcel Breuer. A precise start was provided by the iron anchoring points for the chairs, which were revealed when concrete steps that had been put in at a later stage were taken away. The chairs were rebuilt from chromium-plated steel tubes and covered with grey fabric for

the seats and backs. The chairs were then screwed to the floor covering that had already been laid, whose grey-green colour was established from an original piece that had been found. The colour scheme for the hall and indeed for the whole area was completed even before the installation of the chairs and lighting. Here too the brief was to stick to the original version. Thus all the colours were based on finds and Hinnerk Scheper's colour-guide plan to as large an extent as possible.

Carl Marx, a former Bauhaus pupil, provided expert advice, and was available to those responsible on the building site. In the porch, vestibule and main staircase, red, yellow and blue are a glowing presence alongside white, while the hall is dominated by white, moving through various shades of grey to the black of the window structures, the black-out system and the doors. To meet the needs of the planned studio theatre it was absolutely necessary to provide the cabling necessary for stage lighting that was adequate in every respect and a sound system as part of the reconstruction process. Here too it was necessary to carry out the installation in such a way that the original appearance of the hall was not impaired in any way.

As well as the hall the other rooms in the stage area contain numerous design details that represent outstanding solutions. An example of this is the pair of doors between the vestibule and the hall, which were also reconstructed. Smooth doors, grey on the vestibule side have a section that remains in the thick, black-painted reveal. When the doors are opened their inside, also black, becomes visible. The semicircular black push-buttons on large circular highly-polished aluminium plates fit into a tinplate socket let into the wall. The doors are held open by a steel spring attached to the door-leaves that slides over a steel knob sticking out of the wall when the doors are pushed into position.

Entirely new solutions, co-ordinated with the architecture and design as a whole, were required for the cloakroom and lecture-room, which were created from functional necessity. Characteristic features of the completely smooth surfaces of the wardrobe table were a black front

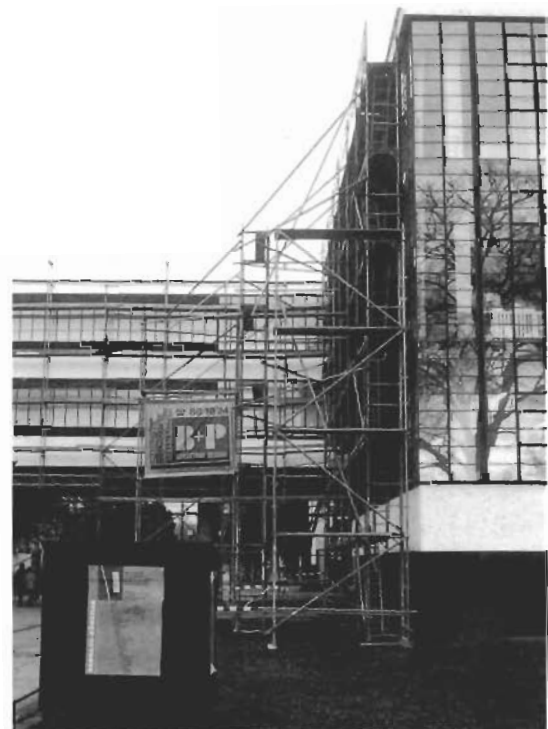
and a white top. A black tubular steel frame was used as a cloakroom stand. The lecture-room is dominated by Marianne Brandt's spherical lamps, which were found in the Bauhaus and concentrated here. The original door latches and striking plates were available in sufficient quantities for the stage area; renovated – cleaned, polished and nickel-plated – they clearly demonstrate their designer's mastery of his art.

A special feature of the renovation of the Bauhaus was that it had to be carried out while the schools were running normally. At the time the building still accommodated three vocational schools, a medical school and branches of an educational college and an engineering school. There were also some smaller school facilities. All that was possible was to stop teaching for a few weeks in the workshop area while work was being carried out on its façade.

In late November 1976 all this work on the first stage of rebuilding the Bauhaus was complete. The measures described here relate to the period before this and leave aside later developments: the renovation of the studio building and all the measures undertaken for the later change of the building's use to restore it to its original purpose.

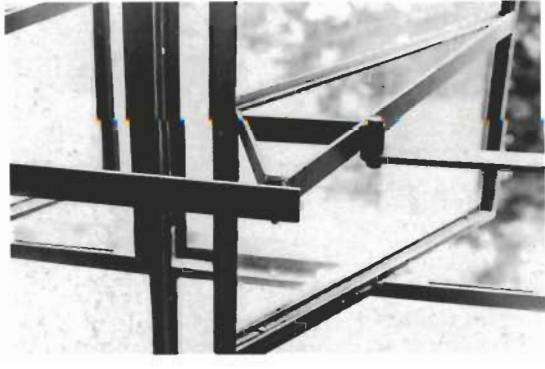
Former Bauhaus members at the opening of the restored Bauhaus on 4 December 1976.
Ise Gropius and Wolfgang Paul inspecting the rebuilt Bauhaus in 1979.

The Bauhaus building – a “working project”: the workshop wing in scaffolding during roof restoration in 1994.



Window opening system on the glass façade of the workshop wing.
Winding mechanism on a window in the workshop wing.

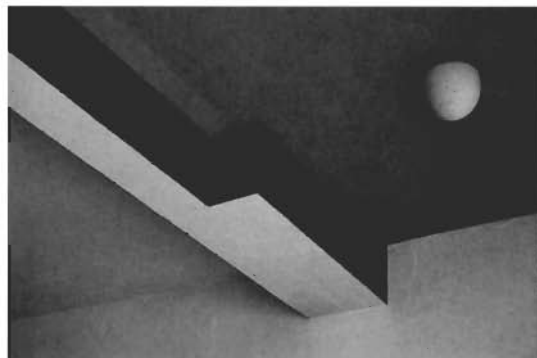
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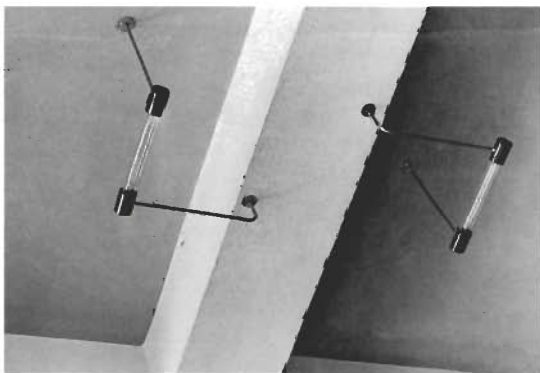
Ceiling lamp with two-zone glass globe, design Marianne Brandt.
Lighting in the hall, reconstructed from the original designs by the metalwork shop (Max Krajewski).



Ceiling light in the refectory, installed in 1976.
Ceiling light in the refectory, reconstructed to a design by the Bauhaus metalwork shop under László Moholy-Nagy.

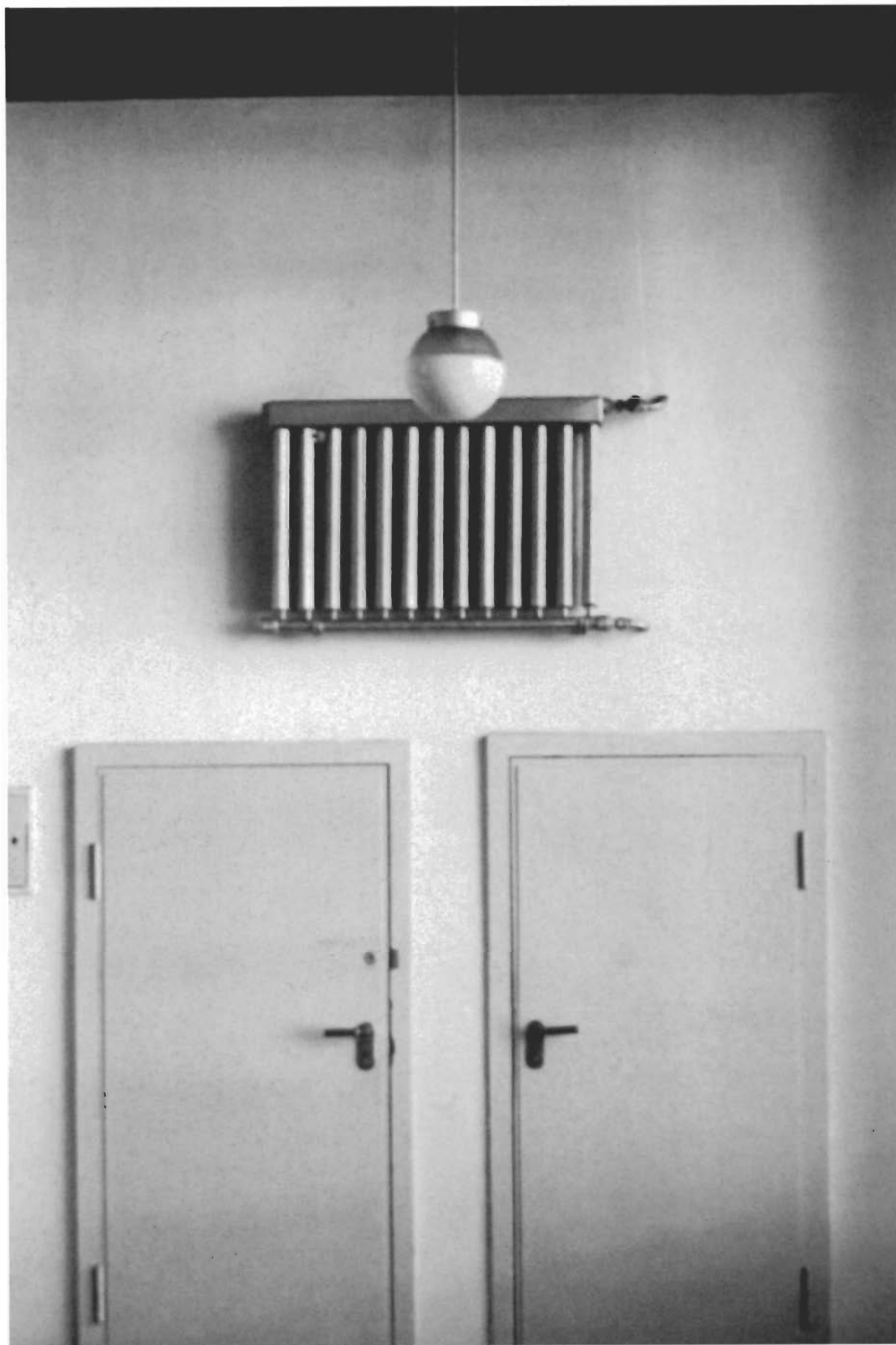


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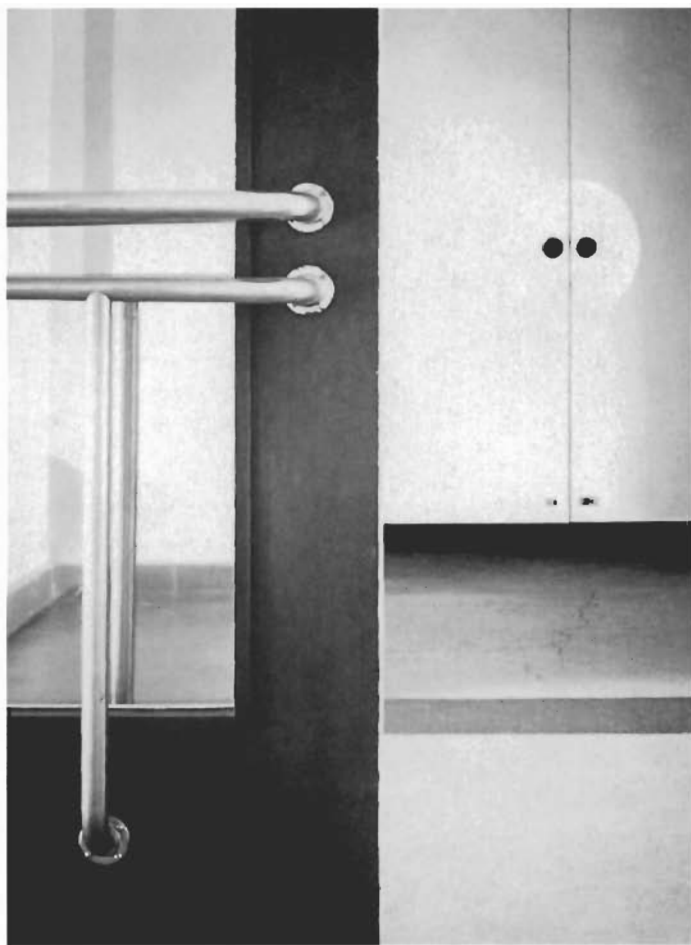


Composition made up of a pair of doors, high-mounted radiator and spherical lamp, reconstructed from a design by Marianne Brandt.

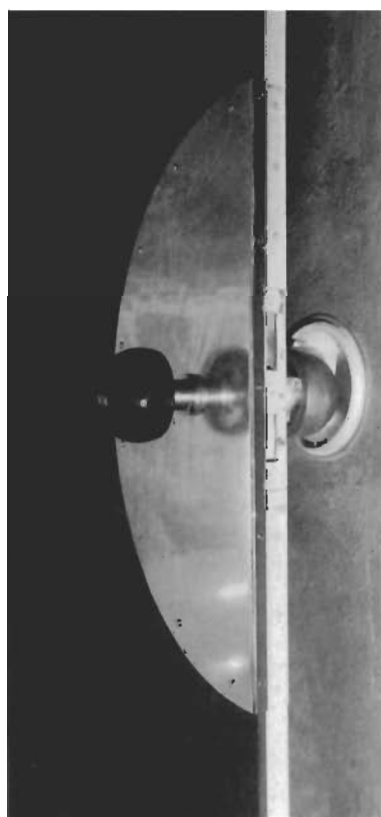
172



Door to the celebration area vestibule, door furniture reconstructed to a design by the Bauhaus metalwork shop under László Moholy-Nagy; one of the hall doors in the background.

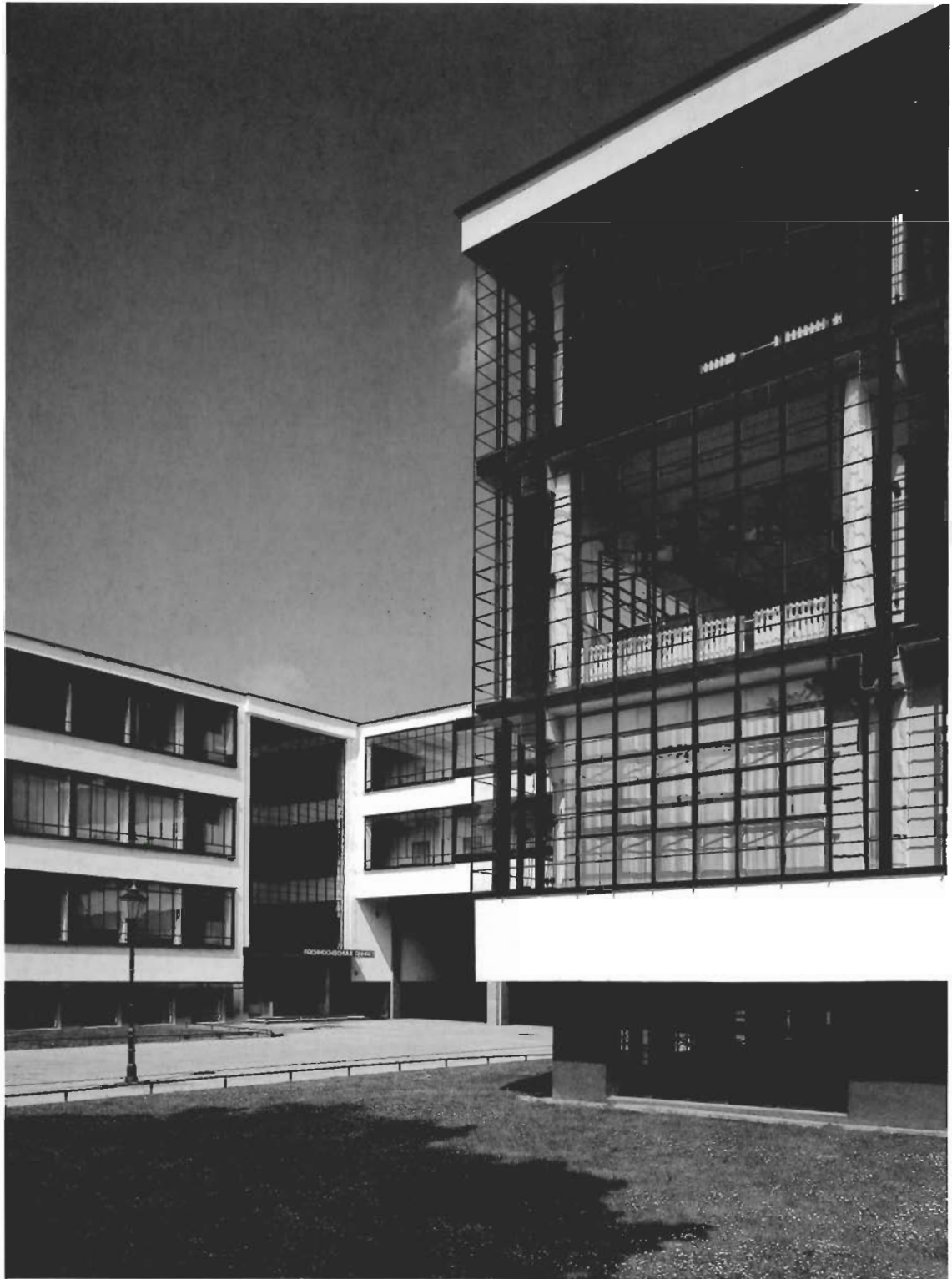


Door handle, design by Walter Gropius.
Semicircular black doorknob on circular aluminium fittings on a door to the hall, fitting into a tinplate socket.



Marieke Kuipers

The Bauhaus and the World Heritage List



At first glance it may seem rather contradictory to place the Bauhaus and its sites within the context of historic buildings and conservation. If any artistic movement faced the future and brought a radical rupture with the cultural traditions of the past, it was the Modern movement, in which the innovative ideas of the Bauhaus masters and students have played such an important role. Today these ideas are still alive but at the same time a new Millennium is near and the cultural achievements of the 20th century society are now due to become part of our heritage. Our environment is changing more radically and faster than ever. Even recently built structures are threatened by the same risks of alteration and destruction as many older monuments. Therefore, a selection is needed of those buildings which deserve legal protection and special attention. Then it is obvious that the Bauhaus buildings should be involved, at least at the state level in Germany (Bundesländer). But what is their position within the large scope of the entire globe and the long range of succeeding civilizations in the age old history of mankind? These are the terms of the World Heritage List, which is meant to protect specific sites of "outstanding universal value".

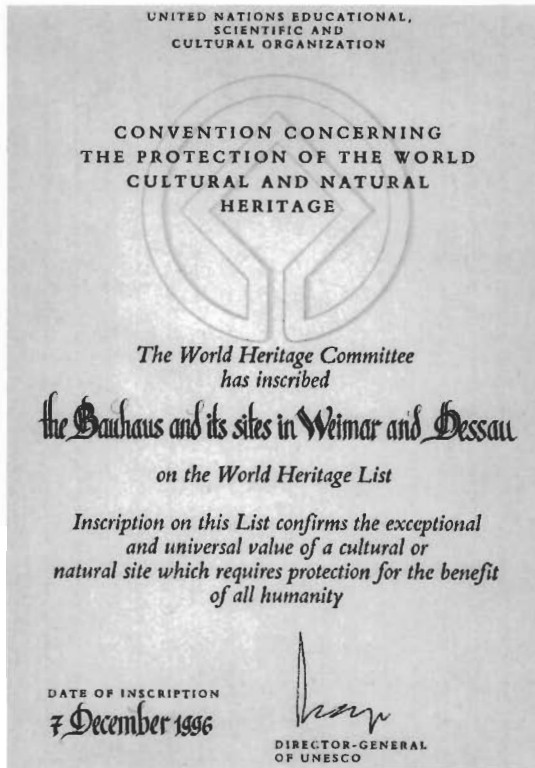
The World Heritage List and 20th Century Sites

Although in many countries conservation departments take good care of the preservation of their historic buildings and sites, some cultural highlights are of such a worldwide significance that they need greater support than only at the national level. So in 1972, the international World Heritage Convention has been accepted by the General Assembly of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in Paris in order to safeguard the most important cultural and natural monuments all over the world. In 1976, the Federal Republic of Germany ratified the convention, followed by the German Democratic Republic in 1988.

Now, after 25 years, the World Heritage List (WHL) counts 506 "world monuments", of which 380 are cultural sites. Most of these sites

date back from the pre-industrial period and refer to world-famous ancient civilizations, like the Egyptian Pyramids, the mud town of Timbuctou in Mali, the Chinese Imperial Palace in Beijing, the Indonesian Borobudur Temple, the Inca Ruins of Machu Picchu in Peru, or the lagoon city of Venice, Italy. In Germany, the paleontological site of the Messel Pit Fossil Site (Grube Messel) with fossils from the Eocene period, the Roman remains and the Liebfrauenkirche in Trier, Saint Mary's Cathedral and Saint Michael's Church in Hildesheim, the Dom Churches in Aachen, Cologne and Speyer, the Cistercian Monastery in Maulbronn, the Castles Augustusburg and Falkenlust in Brühl, King's Hall and Altenmünster in Lorsch, the Hanseatic City of Lübeck, the historic towns of Goslar (including the Castle and the Mining Complex at Rammelsberg), Bamberg and Quedlinburg (with Stift Church and Castle), the Luther Memorials of Wittenberg and Eisleben, the Baroque Residence of Würzburg, the Rococo Wies Pilgrimage Church, the Palaces and Parks in Potsdam and Berlin, the Völklingen Ironworks (Völklinger Hütte) are already inscribed in the List, representing several cultural stages from prehistoric and Roman times to the 19th century, with extensions to the 20th century (concerning the mining ensembles).

The recent inclusion of the Bauhaus and its sites at Weimar and Dessau in the WHL comes next to these truly historic monuments of world cultural heritage. In fact, the Bauhaus forms the third representation of modern architecture in the List, following the inscription of the new capital of Brazil, Brasilia, with the public buildings designed by Oscar Niemeyer and Lucio Costa in 1957-60, and the serene Woodlands Cemetery near Stockholm designed by Gunnar Asplund and Sigurd Lewerentz in 1918-40. From around 1900 date the colourful and exuberant creations in Catalan Jugendstil by Antonio Gaudí in Barcelona, as Casa Milà and the house and park Güell. Apart from these masterpieces as well as the already mentioned mining ensembles and two sad memorials of the Second World War in Auschwitz and Hiroshima, no other manifestations of the widely spread 20th century architecture are present in the WHL.



One reason for this small representation might be that these 'young monuments', which are still so close to our present architecture, must compete with the monumental milestones of previous ages and in some cases have to overcome negative prejudices and popular rejection against modernist formal language. Another reason could be that it requires a large knowledge and profound insight to make a well considered choice from the immense quantity of recent heritage. Moreover, it is in practice very difficult to find proper solutions for rather unknown conservation problems caused by the experimental use of new building materials, such as curtain walls, steel framed windows, reinforced concrete, all sorts of cladding and prefabricated components.

Nevertheless, in 1994 the German government nominated the Bauhaus and its sites – located in Weimar where the school began, and in Dessau where Walter Gropius created a new school building and with his fellows continued the revolutionary educational program – as the first step in the long procedure of WHL assignment. Only member states of the UNESCO which have ratified the convention are allowed to submit proposals. Next

comes the process of evaluation, which is carried out by the nongovernmental International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), as the professional advisory body on cultural heritage to the World Heritage Committee, in this case with the assistance of the international working party for Documentation and Conservation of Buildings, Sites, and Neighborhoods of the Modern Movement (DOCOMOMO). Finally, the property nominated by the German government was inscribed in the World Heritage List by the World Heritage Committee in 1996, leaving an even greater responsibility for the upkeep of the Bauhaus monuments than already existed.

World Heritage List Criteria

Besides legal protection and appropriate plans and finances for the maintenance of the nominated sites, a worldwide significance is required for WHL inclusion. The "Operational Guidelines" (UNESCO) state the selection criteria in article 24, after the last amendments, as follows:

"A monument, group of buildings or site – as defined above – which is nominated for inclusion in the World Heritage List will be considered to be of outstanding universal value for the purpose of the Convention when the Committee finds that it meets one or more of the following criteria and the test of authenticity. Each property nominated should therefore:

- a) I represent a masterpiece of human creative genius; or
- II exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts or town planning and landscape design; or
- III bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared; or
- IV be an outstanding example of a type of building or architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history; or
- V be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement or land-use which is represen-

tative of a culture (or cultures), especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change; or

VI be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance (the Committee considers that this criterion should justify inclusion in the List only in exceptional circumstances or in conjunction with other criteria cultural or natural); and

b)I meet the test of authenticity in design, materials, workmanship or setting and in the case of cultural landscapes their distinctive character and components (the Committee stressed that reconstruction is only acceptable if it is carried out on the basis of complete and detailed documentation on the original and to no extent on conjecture).

II have adequate legal and/or traditional protection and management mechanisms to ensure conservation of the cultural property or cultural landscapes. The existence of protective legislation at the national, provincial or municipal level or well established traditional protection and/or adequate management mechanisms is therefore essential and must be stated clearly on the nomination form. Assurances of the effective implementation of these laws and/or management mechanisms are also expected. Furthermore, in order to preserve the integrity of cultural sites, particularly those open to large numbers of visitors, the State Party concerned should be able to provide evidence of suitable administrative arrangements to cover the management of the property, its conservation and its accessibility to the public."

Annually, the World Heritage Committee reconsiders the guidelines and when necessary, some minor modifications are made for updating. So, when the Bauhaus nomination was under examination, the term 'technology' had not yet entered the two criteria revised later on (a II and IV). However, this extension reflects a more positive attitude towards both the industrial and recent heritage rather than the previous formulations and

might also be in favour of the functionalist architecture, which is so much focused on an appropriate and artistic use of industrial resources.

The Nomination of the Bauhaus Sites

The general justification by the German State Party for the WHL nomination of the Bauhaus sites is summarized in the ICOMOS evaluation report of 1996, from which many parts of this section are paraphrased. The nomination is based on a thematic approach and refers to the specific art-historical development in Germany in the beginning of the 20th century and the worldwide importance of the Bauhaus ideas for the fundamental renewal of architecture, the visual and applied arts, and industrial design. In 1925, the Bauhaus school was forced to move from conservative Weimar to Dessau in order to further pursue their progressive ideas. Therefore, the nomination consists of a group of buildings in the terms of the Guidelines, or of five sites in practice:

1. *the former Art School of the Grand Duke of Saxony (HAB)*, which replaced the former art school of 1870, realised in two stages (1904, 1911) after the design of the Belgian architect Henry van de Velde, at that time director of the School of Applied Arts; the building is representative of the Jugendstil, which in some respect may be considered as a precursor of Modernism, and is situated near (SW) the romantic Park an der Ilm in Weimar (currently at Geschwister-Scholl Straße 8. Originally, the name of the street was Kunstschulstraße);

2. *the former School of Applied Arts of the Grand Duke of Saxony*, the other birthplace of the Bauhaus, which came into being as a new institute after the fusion of the two state art schools in 1919; the building was realised in 1904-06 and also designed in Jugendstil by Van de Velde (after whom the building is now named); the location is opposite of the former Art School in Weimar (Geschwister-Scholl Straße 7);

3. *the experimental Haus am Horn*, designed by the painter Georg Muche at the steep hill side north of the Park an der Ilm and built in

The main building of the former Art School, currently Bauhaus-Universität, in Weimar, designed by Henry van de Velde in 1904, extended in 1911 with renewed studio-window in the attic, 1995.

The former Applied Art school in Weimar, 1995.

The Haus am Horn in Weimar as seen from the south-east, with the later extensions and the higher roof over the central room, 1995.



Interior of the Haus am Horn with the central room in use as a museum-cabinet, exhibiting a model of the original house in the corner, 1995.

The master's house formerly used by Lyonel Feininger in Dessau (Ebertallee 63), as seen from the street after restoration

(with restored studio-window and colours), 1995.

The third of the three semi-detached masters' houses in Dessau (Ebertallee 69-71), originally inhabited by Kandinsky and Klee, as seen from the street, prior to restoration 1998/99 and re-use as art exhibition space, 1995.



1923 as an experiment of the original 'Growing House' concept for a single family; the flat-roofed building, constructed of white plastered concrete blocks, is not only a monument to experimentation with modern technologies, but also the first practical statement of the Bauhaus ideas concerning architecture; today the house is the only surviving architectural structure of this educational institution in Weimar (Am Horn 61);

4. *the Bauhaus school building at Dessau*, which accommodated not only the Bauhaus school but also the municipal technical school; the complex is designed by Walter Gropius and built in 1925-26 at the rear (SW) side of the railway station in the outskirts of Dessau at that time; the asymmetric, flat-roofed building with a reinforced concrete framework and a combination of glazed curtain walls and white and grey plastered walls of concrete blocks, embodies most fully the avant-garde conception of both the institute itself and the German contribution to the international Modern Movement by the architecture of *das Neue Bauen*; the two school blocks are connected by a glazed bridge over a crossroad of the main street (Gropiusallee 38);

5. *the Masters' Houses*, designed by Walter Gropius and built in 1925-26 opposite of the Seven Columns of the Georgium at about one kilometer NW of the Bauhaus school in Dessau, as prototypes of residential building, using the same elements in their groundplans and suited for artists by incorporation of a studio; the Masters' Houses were originally intended for the staff of the Bauhaus and consisted of one detached house for the director and three semi-detached houses of two units each for the masters and their families, but not all houses survived the last war (still existing today are Ebertallee 63, 65-67, 69-71; numbers 59 and 61 were destroyed by an air-raid in 1943); however, the association with the significant 20th century artistic personalities who have lived and worked here (the directors Walter Gropius, Hannes Meyer and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe as well as the masters László Moholy-Nagy, Josef Albers, Lyonel Feininger, Georg Muche, Oskar Schlemmer, Wassily Kandinsky, Paul Klee and others) still remains.

History and evaluation

After completion, all Bauhaus sites underwent several extensions and other changes (both in use and appearance), as most buildings have to because unlike pieces of art they cannot be kept in a museum: They have to suit the changing needs of the users over time. Therefore, the evaluation for listing historic buildings to be protected as monuments does not only take the original creation into account but also the recognizability of the original intentions in the present appearance. For instance, extensions, decorations or modernizations added later on, can be accepted as part of the history of the building if they show true respect for the original architecture and even strengthen its meaning. On the other hand, reconstructions of original details will be critically reviewed with regard to the demands of the WHL criteria on authenticity.

Most sites have been enriched by works of art by Bauhaus masters or students, but often such efforts turned out to be of temporary effect. Following the great Bauhaus exhibition at Weimar in 1923, the young sculptor Joost Schmidt made an almost wall-high relief, placed at the left side of the main stairwell in the vestibule of the Art School. But already in 1924, this Constructivist sculpture was due to disappear because of damages and lack of support by the authorities. At the same occasion the Bauhaus student Herbert Bayer painted three constructivist compositions on the walls of the secondary stairwell, while master Oskar Schlemmer created sculptures and wallpaintings of human figures in an abstracted, schematic manner, situated in the hall and the stairwell of the School of Applied Arts. After the radical reorganization of institute and management in 1925, the later directors of the Bauhochschule and Hochschule regarded all these wallpaintings as "entartete" Kunst and had them painted over in 1928, respectively 1930.

During the Second World War, several buildings had been damaged, which caused the loss of Gropius' director's house and the adjacent Master House of László Moholy-Nagy in Dessau, while other damage could be repaired in the former Art School at Weimar and the Bauhaus



school building in Dessau. Moreover, the most typical Bauhaus buildings had consequently suffered from later ideological changes of the authorities, which had led to the coverage of the curtainwall of the Dessau school building and the neglect of other buildings. But in the 1970s, the first attempts were made to restore modern architecture in East Germany, followed by more recent projects of partial reconstruction and appropriate (re-)use.

Both schools in Weimar are still in use for artistic education, albeit not in the same way as during the early Bauhaus period. The wall sculpture of Joost Schmidt and the murals by Herbert Bayer in the former Art School, as well as the murals by Oskar Schlemmer in the former School of Applied Arts have been reconstructed for the major part in the late 1970s, based on historic photographs and remaining pieces. The Haus am Horn has been extended later on, according to the original concept. In addition, the kitchen has been modernized, but the house still incorporates the furniture provided by Marcel Breuer, the floor lamp of Gyula Pap, textiles by Martha Erps-Breuer and many other original features, even in the bathroom. In the still inhabited house, the central room serves as a 'museum cabinet', showing the history and meaning of this only original Bauhaus building remaining in Weimar. In the central room, later works of applied art by masters or students of the Bauhaus are displayed.

At present, the Bauhaus school building in Dessau is owned and mainly occupied by the Bauhaus Dessau Foundation, for teaching, workshops, research, museum exhibitions and activities, performances and archives. Part of the Northern wing is used by the Fachhochschule Anhalt (University of Applied Sciences of the State of Saxony-Anhalt). Thus, after a long disruption since 1932, some of the original uses are more or less continued. By comparison, the use of the Masters' Houses differs more from the original intentions. Recently, the former Feininger House (no 63) has been restored (including steel framed windows of studio and stairwell and color schemes inside and outside) and is now used as Dessau's Kurt-Weill Center, dedicated to the famous composer and son of the city.

Damp patches on the white plaster layers and colour-shift in the top of the plastered wall after different stages of repair and maintenance of the studio wing, 1995.

Roof of the studio building, 1994.



View from the south-east corner of the workshop wing of the west side of the studio building, with visible damage to the paintwork and plaster, 1998.



The hall with reconstructed lamps, windows and seats, 1995.

Guest room in the studio building with balcony door, 1993.

The corridor of the upper floor of the glazed bridge with new 'old' door-handles (reconstructed to Gropius's design for the masters' houses), unpaved floor and partly renewed heating elements, 1995.

182



During the evaluation period, the western units of the former Masters' Houses at numbers 67 and 71 were temporarily used as dependence of the Naturkunde Museum (Museum of Natural Science) and the Design Center of the State of Saxony-Anhalt. The other units of the semi-detached houses (65 and 69) were privately inhabited by tenants without any apparent relation to the Bauhaus. The semi-detached house no. 69-71 (Kandinsky/Klee) is being restored and transformed into a museum in 1998.

Since many modern buildings were intended to meet specialized or short-term needs, they were designed to facilitate their replacement or adaptation to other uses and were often constructed of experimental or short-lived materials and components. Moreover, the adoption of rationalized building methods is an essential part of the workmanship, especially in the detailing of construction. Therefore some replacements of original materials and other alterations could be acceptable, as long as the original creative concept (idea) in form, space and appearance can still be recognized and if eventual reconstructions are based on thorough research.



Main stairwell with restored windows and colours on the reinforced concrete supporting beams; in the left-hand corner a work by a recent student; 1992.
Stairwell in the studio building, 1993.

Staircase in the studio building, 1997.

183



The carefully reconstructed curtain wall of the Bauhaus school building in Dessau with a look-alike framework with exactly the same dimensions as the original one, but made of aluminium instead of steel, is a clear example of these thoughts. Many 'typical Bauhaus' elements in the interior – such as the floor of the entrance hall, the lamps, radiators, tubular steel furniture and window opening mechanisms in the auditorium, the entrance doors between these spaces – have been reconstructed, based on remaining models, drawings or photographs of the original designs. In other cases more research is needed for reliable reconstructions, if one would desire at all to bring back all 'original' details and if one would know which stage is the most representative for the developing history of the building. Anyhow, the current and future conservation practice should be justified in public.

Each of the Bauhaus sites has its own history of building, alteration and conservation, but it would take a whole book to sketch these interesting developments and it would also be worthwhile to discuss in detail the different solutions, especially with regard to the interior decoration (colors, furniture, works of art) and the individual segments of reconstruction. Since this article is only meant for a general explanation of the listing method of the WHL, it might be sufficient to quote the conclusion of the ICOMOS evaluation report of 1996:

"Although the three buildings in Weimar have undergone several alterations and partial reconstructions, there is no reason to dispute their authenticity (apart from the reconstructed murals in the two Schools). Similarly, despite the level of reconstruction, the Dessau Bauhaus preserves its original appearance and atmosphere, thanks in considerable measure to the major restoration work in 1976. So far as the Masters' Houses are concerned, the restoration work being carried out on one of the semi-detached houses is the result of thorough research and may be judged to meet the test of authenticity. The future of the other semi-detached houses remains in doubt and so it is too early to comment on their authenticity.

In the event of their being restored in the same way as No 63 Ebertallee, the question of authenticity would be resolved satisfactorily."¹

For further evaluation, it is usual to compare the nominated sites with other buildings of the same period in order to investigate if they indeed are of "outstanding universal value". In case of the Bauhaus sites, the overall conclusion was that "comparative analysis is both inappropriate and unnecessary" because "Weimar and Dessau represent the birthplace of one of the most significant movements in architecture and art since Palladio (whose contribution is acknowledged with the designation of Vicenza as a World Heritage site in 1994)."²

Although it would be possible to find buildings of more or less the same period with similar functions (such as Mathildenhöhe at Darmstadt) or with similar architectural features (such as the experimental residential building from the Prague architectural exhibition or the curtain walled Van Nelle factory building at Rotterdam, The Netherlands) the double meaning of the Bauhaus sites for the 20th century development in art and architecture is without equals. This is also stated in the final recommendation for inscription on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria II, IV and VI of the ICOMOS report:

"The group of buildings in Weimar and Dessau that constitute the nomination are the seminal works of the Bauhaus architectural school, the foundation of the Modern Movement which was to revolutionize artistic and architectural thinking and practice in the twentieth century."³

Challenges of the Past and Future

The justification for the WHL inclusion also underlines the meaning of the Bauhaus sites as expressions of its modern ideas, which are still influential today:

„The Bauhaus has become the symbol of modern architecture for both its educational theory and its buildings throughout the world and is inseparable from the name of Walter Gropius. The Bauhaus itself and the other buildings designed by masters of the Bauhaus are fundamental

representatives of 'classical modernism' and as such are essential components of the image of their period of the 20th century. Their consistent artistic grandeur is a reminder of the still incomplete project for 'modernity with a human face', which seeks to use technical and intellectual resources at its disposition not in a destructive way but to construct a living environment worthy of human aspirations. For this reason they are important monuments not only for art history but also for the history of ideas of the 20th century. Even though the Bauhaus ideas of social reform turned out to be little more than wishful thinking, its utopia became reality at least to the extent that architecture came into existence whose direct accessibility still has the power to fascinate and which belongs to the peoples of all nations as their cultural heritage as the 20th century moves towards its close."⁴

From the skyhigh aspirations of the Bauhaus masters in the past it is a huge step down to earth to meet the current needs of conservation of the surviving sites and to develop common activities for these purposes. These tasks will not be easy, both for practical, technical and financial reasons. There are special guidelines for the maintenance of World Heritage sites which after the inscription, will be regularly inspected for their state and under continuous attention to control if proper care of both the buildings and their direct environment is provided. In the 'worst case scenario' a WHL inclusion can be withdrawn, but usually there can be found an acceptable solution in case of conflicting interests.



In spite of the common ties with the evolution of the Bauhaus, the legal status of the related monuments is different because in Germany, the protection is delegated to the state level. So, the three buildings in Weimar are listed in the Register of Historic Monuments of the Free State of Thuringia, while only the Bauhaus school building at Dessau is listed in the equivalent Register of the State of Saxony-Anhalt. The Masters' Houses, although by their original use and design indissolubly linked to the main school, are municipal property of Dessau but they are not legally protected. The new WHL status requires therefore additional measures for which conservation and regional development plans are already in progress.

However, some conservation problems including proper use and respectful adaptations, still remain to be solved. Indeed, at the end of this century, the challenges of the past created by the Bauhaus masters provide an even greater challenge, and that is to take care of the Bauhaus sites for the future.

1 ICOMOS, Report on World Heritage List, The Bauhaus, no 729, Paris, October 1996, p. 30 (unpublished document).

2 op. cit. Anm. 1, p. 30.

3 op. cit. Anm. 1, p. 30.

4 op. cit. Anm. 1, p. 27.

Berthold Burkhardt

The Conservation of Modern Monuments

Renovating the Bauhaus building



At almost the same time as the seventieth anniversary of the opening of the Dessau Bauhaus a UNESCO meeting in Mexico in 1996 placed the Weimar Bauhaus and the Haus am Horn and the Dessau Bauhaus with the masters' houses on the World Heritage List. This recognition is associated with the duty of reappraising historical links, maintaining the buildings and ensuring that they are used appropriately.

Buildings are long-lived testimonies to their times, allowing the "place where things happened" to be experienced by seeing and touching. Because they are not as abstract as drawings and writing they make it possible to understand the unity of idea and work more directly. But because they are constantly used and heavy demands are placed on them, and regular maintenance is necessary they are more difficult to preserve than objects in museums. Not that we should complain about this – every monument that reminds us of its original use, indeed still makes that use meaningfully possible, like Gropius's Fagus factory in Alfeld (1911–1915) for the manufacture of shoe lasts, Otto Haesler's Boschan-von-Aschrott old people's home in Kassel (1931) or the Bauhaus building as a place for teaching, experiment and communication, is particularly valuable in this respect.

Dealing with Modern buildings and estates makes it particularly clear that it is not just a matter of developing specific technical and physical renovation processes, but that the general rules of monument preservation need to be interpreted in terms of Modernism.

The Bauhaus's products and results are strewn around a number of towns and places, as things that can be moved are always changing their owner and location. Dessau has a number of particularly significant Modern buildings. These include the masters' houses (1925), first occupied by Feininger, Muche, Schlemmer, Klee and Kandinsky, the municipal labour exchange (1928), the estate of terraced houses with the co-operative building in Törten, all by Walter Gropius, Hannes Meyer's Laubenganghäuser, also in Törten (1928), the Kornhaus restaurant on the Elbe (1929) and a detached house in Törten (1926), both by Carl Fieger, and last

but not least the Stahlhaus by Georg Muche and Richard Paulick (1926). The houses that were damaged in the masters' estate, Walter Gropius's director's villa and Moholy-Nagy's half of a semi-detached house, the drinking hall, Mies van der Rohe's only little building in Dessau no longer exist. They too are evidence of the work of the Bauhaus, but not a responsibility for monument preservation, even though there are copies and reproductions within the trend of the times in many places. Even if the Bauhaus Foundation "only" owns the Bauhaus building and the Stahlhaus, there is a joint responsibility with private owners to maintain the buildings in Dessau. For this reason everyone concerned with this has formed a renovation committee in Dessau to find common guidelines and appropriate renovation methods.

Two conferences in autumn 1996, the international DOCOMOMO conference¹ in Slovakia and the national ICOMOS conference² at the monument fair in Leipzig confirmed that "Modernism" in architecture as in other spheres has now become a concept that needs explaining. Modernism of the Bauhaus period has to be distinguished from subsequent so-called "Modernisms" in terms of time, content, ideas and form.

It can be called classical Modernism – classical in Frei Otto's definition, according to which a high degree of optimization has been achieved that is essentially no longer capable of being enhanced. This refers to the conception as a whole, but is dependent on technical detail, which will be discussed later.

Classical Modernism, which came to a violent end in Germany in particular through the Nazis, has since the war consistently been a starting- and reference-point for further developments; it provokes reactions or reflections, some of which lead to imitations and alienations in theory and practice. These problems are particularly conspicuous in the field of practical monument preservation, as a result of creeping changes and adulteration of buildings and their interiors by empathy or the questionable use of ultra-modern resources and methods when maintaining and renovating. This may be because the same and similar design

ideas have meant that classical Modernism is still today considered modern, and that it is not considered necessary – or has been neglected – to analyse the original, its origins or its functional and physical history.

When handling monuments, it is consequently not just a matter of technology, but also of a philosophy of careful monument preservation. Walter Gropius and his contemporaries are precisely the people we cannot consult about this approach. He saw his distance from art and architectural history as an absolute necessity for gaining room for manoeuvre, so that he could concentrate consistently on new things.³ His field of work was not maintaining existing or even valuable building stock.

But Walter Gropius's methodological approach and requirement when dealing with the built and designed environment can be adopted unreservedly: "A thing is determined by its essence, and in order to design it so that it functions correctly, a vessel, a chair, a house, its essence must first be researched."⁴ This quotation dating from 1924 could be taken as a guideline for all monument preservation, not just that of the Bauhaus buildings. So let us first of all try to research the essence of the Bauhaus, so that we can plan and implement the philosophy and technology for repairs to maintain the building stock and for uses that are compatible with the building's survival.

It is not just the outer and inner overall form that represents the particular qualities and value of a building: functional detail that adds to the general design is also important, arising from technical and craft conditions either at the time of the original building or from later interventions, e.g. rebuilding measures or repairs. Knowledge of this kind is invaluable when analysing and assessing damage, whether it is caused by ageing or material fatigue, lack of or improper care and repair or mistakes in planning or construction. Thus the technology for restoring historic buildings is not necessarily identical with the development of building technology.

„The history of the development of architecture showed that changes in building

forms are related to the development of their technical resources."⁵ This statement by Walter Gropius in 1925 shows quite unambiguously that he required modern technical development in building. Classical Modernism is consequently not only a social and architectural reaction to the 19th and the early 20th century, but shows quite clearly the aim of continuing and reinforcing the process of industrialization in building that had already started. But now development in building means research and practical experiments. Gropius wants there to be public building research establishments, of the kind that actually were set up for the building of the Weißenhof estate in Stuttgart in 1927 or the Dessau estate in Törten (1926–30).⁶ For the Törten estate it was agreed with the Reichsforschungsgesellschaft (research society), who funded the project, that not just standardized terraced houses and new manufacturing methods should be developed, but that details should be addressed: windows in either wood, steel or concrete, wall structures with one or two shells or different roof coverings. Unfortunately shortage of time meant that the agreed comparative assessment and judgement could not be carried out.

Experiments were and are essential for building, but in the stormy phase of development in the twenties and thirties, as incidentally also happened in the post-war period, there was no lack of mistakes in technology or building physics. Thus it is definitely not appropriate, when assessing the overall development, to accuse Modern architects of inadequate technical knowledge or carelessness, or to pronounce subsequently that experimental buildings are end products.

The Bauhaus as an example

If we consider the Bauhaus between Gropius's two buildings for Fagus in Alfeld (1911–15) and the labour exchange in Dessau (1928), then there are relatively few structural innovations or experiments. It is a logical example of the application of then familiar technologies for implementing functional and architectural concepts and ideas. This does not in any way detract from its importance. The main structure, a reinforced concrete skeleton, is con-

structed of site-mixed concrete, filled with brickwork. The balconies of the Prellerhaus, also in reinforced concrete, find their predecessors in the bi-axially protruding staircase landings in Alfeld, like the large but intricately structured steel and glass façades in Alfeld or the Werkbund building (1914) in Cologne. It is still not clear why Gropius, after by no means satisfactory experience in terms of building physics with large areas of single-glazed windows in his building in Alfeld, or as a user of Van de Velde's Bauhaus in Weimar, decided to go ahead with a curtain façade without any improvements worth mentioning in Dessau, under circumstances that were spatially less favourable. With the exception of photographs taken during building and incomplete tender documents there is very little source material relating to construction and execution. However, the survey and documentation undertaken under the direction of Konrad Püschel in 1964 are of inestimable value for the collection of evidence, dating and investigations into building history.

The fact that we know so little technically and in terms of technical history about this building should be less of a cause for complaint about what has been missed as a stimulus to extend our knowledge of the existing building and to understand its origins and the changes made to it. It is only now, shortly before and during the renovation work that is about to start, that the history of the building's construction is being written. Over seventy years of different use, changes, modification, destruction, damage and repairs are contained in this.

The guideline for restoration of ancient monuments is not reconstruction, it is "putting things in order" and thus maintenance, which also leaves intelligible traces of the story of this building's life and sufferings.

Today, in 1998, we see the Bauhaus building in a 1976 version, the period in which certain architects in the GDR including Bernd Grönwald, Christian Schädlich, Hans Berger, Konrad Püschel and Wolfgang Paul succeeded in rescuing the badly damaged and scarcely recognizable building. There is no doubt that this renovation, which

aimed at reconstruction and repair, successfully made the buildings, façades and interiors visible and open to experience as an architectural manifesto of the Bauhaus. The meaning of this so-called 76 renovation may make it easier for some people to take joint responsibility for the decision to leave sections of the building including doors, windows and exterior rendering in a condition that makes it possible to recognize what was possible in the GDR at that time in terms of materials and execution. In 1976 Konrad Püschel wanted to restore the building's outward face and reconstruct large parts of the original building stock. In 2001 or 2002 we will see what the renovation that is now due had achieved, but all this in the light of the fact that Püschel's work had now become original as well.

The Bauhaus was built for flexible use to a very high standard, and this feature will be retained. New uses after 1976 and 1992 require some changes that are intended to be intelligible as such:

1. Establishment of an archive with partial air-conditioning in the basement of the vocational school/college wing, which originally served as caretaker's accommodation, and for storage and workshops.
2. Now that the heating plant with coal bunkers can be abandoned after connection to the area heating network, these rooms can be used for technology, events and a bookshop. The spatial sequence of the stage workshop and the gymnastics room can be restored.
3. Immediately after reunification, but planned long before, a restaurant, the Club and the Bauhaus's valuable stock of its original products (above all furniture and graphics) were established in the basement, in the rooms of the former Bauhaus printing shop.

The intention is to rebuild or reconstruct the through, transparent space on the upper bridge floor, Gropius's former architectural studio. The former sports field at the back is to be re-established, at least partially or as a suggestion. The understandable reason for these two measures is to demonstrate the Bauhaus's key idea of an overall

shape for life, work and leisure in terms of the congruence of building and content. Restoring the road that makes the architectural form of the two wings connected by the bridge comprehensible and intelligible is also seen as a very important factor.

Monument preservation solutions have still to be found for some areas that are particularly difficult technically:

The masonry-filled reinforced concrete structure constantly shows movement and cracks, presumably as a result of inadequate stiffening.

A concept for heating and air-conditioning is required to harmonize user requirements and the membrane-like appearance of the outer skin.

Current use requires a great deal of technical equipment for lighting and data networks.

Building period and life expectancy

„Buildings that were never intended to get old“⁷ or „A sell-by date for Modernism“⁸ were headlines used by the press when reporting the above-mentioned ICOMOS conference in Leipzig on conserving Modern buildings. But the main ideas in the Bauhaus architect's mind were adaptability, flexibility and renewal. Werner Graeff used an analogy with domestic architecture when describing what applied to the Bauhaus building and its multifunctional spaces for working, learning, living, play and leisure: „... to the extent that one gives practical examples for living it is all right for the time being to fix as little as possible, on the contrary to show that everything can still be shaped – shaped by use (this is also why there are variable ground plans) – then one will help to clarify how a building will be lived in.“⁹

The functional aspect of adaptability, as can be demonstrated in many respects in the Bauhaus building, is influenced by technical possibilities and economic conditions. In his explanation of his houses for the Weißenhof estate in Stuttgart, Max Taut summed up Modern architects' interests and aims in this respect as follows: „... the technical measures are directed at requirements of economy; rapid building methods seem absolutely necessary to avoid loss of interest. Therefore: rapid

construction and ability to use the house rapidly.“¹⁰ These business management considerations clearly relate to manufacture, and also to adaptation through conversion or extension, qualified only by service and maintenance.

It is therefore important to decide between rapid and economical manufacture and a definitely planned lifetime for the building.

Very few architects build and plan in terms of time, apart from peripheral themes like mobile exhibition structures. The demand for time-related buildings and building systems, in other words planning to dismantle the building at the same time as its erection, and including building demolition expenses into the construction costs, did not become an integrated architectural idea until the sixties, with the third generation of Modern architects like Frei Otto, Yona Friedman or the Archigram group. Despite the large numbers of classical Modern buildings there are scarcely any traces of reversible building systems or details suggesting a planned demolition or rebuilding in another place. Even Bruno Taut's fantastic designs and architectural utopias, while giving only a hazy idea of technical realization, give absolutely no indication of physical transience.

There is probably no previous time or epoch when so many new technical building processes, variations in and combinations of materials were developed and put into practice. Prefabricated steel and timber structures, floor and support elements in concrete were invented, patented and also used in building in almost unquantifiable numbers in the first decades of the 20th century, although general standardization was not introduced into the building industry until 1926. Development, progress and experiments were also made in technical equipment for buildings, in other words in the spheres of electrical, sanitary and heating installations. In contrast to the buildings themselves, it was accepted in the case of technical installations that lighting, plumbing or heating devices would be replaced if they wore out or were superseded by new developments.

Thus the lifetime of a building may differ from part to part. This also means that when

a building is being refurbished or maintained there will be constructions, materials and equipment dating from almost any time in the last seventy years, even if not all examples are as vivid as the restorers' "colour windows".

"Perhaps the attempts to devise new building processes that can be found in all countries would not have started so quickly if there had not been such a severe housing shortage everywhere. Building more cheaply without building any worse, building quickly and without a winter break, that is what all the attempts were aimed at."¹¹ The needs and problems of the twenties are made very clear in Adolf Behne's precise observation dating from 1927, published in the book *Wie bauen?* (How to build?). If one tries to analyse building events in this period, then this remark of Behne's should not be overlooked. Research and experiments in building lead to major technical, functional and economic improvements, but also to mistakes and failure. Not every improvement in detail is compatible with the complex whole. In the case of Modern technical building developments this applies particularly to physical building components, and this is still the case today. Almost all Modern materials, from glass to reinforced concrete, from timber to insulation, are now durable materials with specific wear and ageing characteristics. Many of them are being rediscovered today. The deciding factor in this question of durability therefore lies much more in the detail and in the complex interplay of the elements of a building's physical construction. This will also determine the crucial renovation technologies for the Bauhaus building, the partial renewal, repairs and the removal or minimization of physical weaknesses and problems with the internal climate of the building.

Even if it were the case that the Bauhaus masters were planning temporary, transient architecture or were just putting up experimental buildings, our present concept of monuments reserves the right not to accept this testament, but to extend the life of these buildings for an indefinite period – not as a means of conducting research into renovation technology, but in order to make it possible to experience the story for as long as possible, so anticipating an end, but without a sell-by date.

- 1 DOCOMOMO, International working party for Documentation and Conservation of buildings, sites and neighbourhoods of the Modern Movement, Eindhoven.
- 2 ICOMOS; International Council on Monuments and Sites, German national committee.
- 3 Christian Schädlich, Die Baukunst ist keine angewandte Archäologie, in: Hartmut Probst, Christian Schädlich, Walter Gropius, 3 volumes, volume 1, Berlin 1985.
- 4 Walter Gropius, Grundsätze der Bauproduktion, 1924, in: Neue Arbeiten der Bauhauswerkstätten, Munich 1925.
- 5 Walter Gropius, Glasbau, in: Die Bauzeitung, issue 23, Stuttgart 1926.
- 6 Bericht über die Versuchssiedlung in Dessau, in: Reichsforschungsgesellschaft für Wirtschaftlichkeit im Bau- und Wohnungswesen e.V., special issue no. 7, group IV no. 4, 2nd year of publication, April 1929.
- 7 Nikolaus Bernau, Häuser, die niemals alt werden sollten, in: Der Tagesspiegel, Berlin, 22. November 1996.
- 8 Ira Mazzoni, Verfallsdatum der Moderne, in: Süddeutsche Zeitung, 18 November 1996.
- 9 Wener Graeff, Vorwort, in: Bau und Wohnung, Deutscher Werkbund (ed.), Stuttgart 1927.
- 10 Max Taut, Meine Stuttgarter Häuser, in: Deutscher Werkbund (ed.), Bau und Wohnung, Stuttgart 1927.
- 11 Adolf Behne, Vorwort, in: Heinz und Bodo Rasch: Wie Bauen?, Stuttgart 1927.

The following exterior views of the Bauhaus building were photographed from nearly identical standpoints in the 1920s and 1990s. The historical photographs are printed in brown-tinged grey, the current photographs in blue-tinged grey.



Main entrance, photographed before 1930, and wing of the Technische Lehranstalten, north-west view, photograph by Lucia Moholy, 1926.

194



Main entrance and wing of the Technische Lehranstalten, north-west view, photographs by Dieter Rausch, 1993.



View from the bridge of the studio building and the intermediate section with refectory and stage, photograph by Lucia Moholy, 1926, and east view, photograph by Leonard, 1927/28.

196



View from the bridge of the studio building and the intermediate section with refectory and stage, and east view, photographs by Dieter Rausch, 1993.



197





Balconies of the studio building and staircase to the refectory terrace on the courtyard side, south-west view, photographs by Dieter Rausch, 1993.



South view, photograph by Lucia Moholy, c. 1927 and view from the studio building roof terrace of the bridge and wing of the Technische Lehranstalten, photograph by Mathilde Reindl, c. 1927/28.

200



South view and view from the roof terrace of the studio building roof terrace of the bridge and wing of the Technische Lehnanstalten, photographs by Dieter Rausch, 1993.

201



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- Dietz Verlag, Berlin and Christian Borchert 131
- Dover Publications Inc., New York 128
- Gebrüder Mann Verlag, Berlin 61
- Justus Herrenberger 162
- Armin Herrmann 152 (below)
- Hubert Hoffmann 78
- Aurel Hrabušický 106 (below right)
- Institut für angewandte Kunst, Berlin (no longer in existence) 130 (left)
- Klaus-Dieter Jänicke 185
- Margret Kentgens-Craig 169 (below right)
- Klinkhardt und Biermann Verlag, Leipzig/-Berlin 124 (left)
- Peter Kühn 152 (above), 153
- Marieke Kuipers 178, 180, 181 (left above, middle, right), 182 (above, below), 183 (above)
- Klaus Ockl 173 (left)
- Wolfgang Paul 169 (below left), 170 (below left), 171 (below left)
- Brigitte Peterhans 144 (above and middle right)
- Erna Pintaske 147 (below right)
- Dieter Rausch 155 (below left, below right), 156, 157 (above right), 193 (below), 195, 197, 199, 201
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- Wilhelm Schulze 166 (above left, middle left)
- Kurt Schwarzer 81
- Ute-Karen Seggelke 181 (below left), 182 (middle), 183 (below left)
- Michael Siebenbrodt 63, 171 (above left, above right, below right), 172, 173 (above right, below right)
- Michael Siebenbrodt and Christine Kutschke 52 (below)
- Hanno Spelsberg 152 (below)
- Stadtarchiv Dessau 69 (below), 73 (above, below), 74, 75, 76, 118 (below)
- Ernst Steinkopf 81 (above), 149
- Stiftung Bauhaus Dessau (Photographers: Wolfgang Burat, John Fass, Kelly Kellerhoff, Sigrid Schütze-Rodemann and others): 8, 9, 13 (below), 51, 54, 55 (above, below), 56 (above, below), 57 (above, below), 59, 60 (above, middle), 66, 71, 81 (below), 82, 83, 84 (above, middle, below), 97 (right), 100, 102, 103 (middle), 106 (above, below left), 134–141, 145 (above left, below), 146, 147 (left), 150, 151, 154, 155 (above), 157 (above left, below), 165 (above left, middle left), 174, 176, 183 (right), 186
- Stiftung Bauhaus Dessau and Alexandra Bormann-Arndt 109
- Stiftung Bauhaus Dessau and Ursula Kirsten-Collein 103 (below)
- Stiftung Bauhaus Dessau and Lux Feininger 10
- Stiftung Bauhaus Dessau and Dirk Scheper 42
- Sveriges Television Bildarkivet and Das Fotoarchiv Essen 144 (below)
- Wolfgang Thöner 181 (right)
- Verlag der NSDAP (no longer in existence) 125
- Verlag Volk und Wissen, Berlin 130 (right)
- VG-Bildkunst, Bonn 62, 69 (above), 103 (above), 126 (ill. in: Giedion, „Raum, Zeit, Architektur“, Zürich, München 1976 u.ä.)
- Karin Wilhelm 25 (above, below)
- Atsuo Yamawaki 86

Index of names

206

Adickes, Franz 91
 Albers, Anni 99, 104
 Albers, Josef 21, 71, 95, 98, 100, 105, 179
 Alberti, Leon Battista 126
 Allner, Heinz 103
 Archigram 190
 Argan, Giulio Carlo 18, 128
 Arndt, Alfred 71
 Arnheim, Rudolf 23, 43, 123
 Asplund, Gunnar 175

Bahlsen 115
 Barr, Alfred H. Jr. 119, 127
 Bartning, Otto 115
 Baumeister, Willy 98
 Bayer, Herbert 45, 48, 60, 62, 95, 103, 105, 126, 179, 180
 Beck, Ulrich 71
 Begenau, S. H. 80
 Behne, Adolf 88, 117, 123, 191
 Behr, Adalbert 81
 Behrendt, Walter Curt 124
 Behrens, Peter 18, 135
 Benevolo, Leonardo 129
 Benn, Gottfried 89
 Benscheidt 113
 Bentzien, Hans 148
 Berger, Hans 164, 189
 Berger, Otti 108, 109, 143
 Berlage, Hendrik Petrus 115
 Bill, Max 103, 108, 128
 Bloch, Ernst 128
 Boeken 113
 Borcherts, Christian 131
 Brandt, Marianne 34, 104, 105, 131, 144, 168, 171, 172
 Breuer, Marcel 9, 29, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 54, 55, 95, 97, 104, 105, 107, 126, 167, 180
 Brunelleschi, Filippo 126
 Brüning, Ute 48
 Burchard 113

Citroën, Paul 95
 Clemens, Roman 108
 COBRA 100
 Collein, Edmund 103
 Consemüller, Erich 8, 30, 31, 32, 113, 143, 144, 145
 Costa, Lucio 175

Dal Co, Francesco 130, 131
 Dexel, Walter 117
 Diederichs, Eugen 92
 Döcker, Richard 113
 Dolinski, Bruno 180

Dorner, Alexander 117
 Dürckheim, Graf K. von 21, 23

Ehrenburg, Ilya 16, 17, 116, 123, 126
 Eiffel, Gustave 124
 Engemann, Friedrich 71
 Erps-Breuer, Martha 180

Feininger, Lux 108
 Feininger, Lyonel 7, 16, 72, 88, 95, 178, 179, 187
 Fieger, Carl 7, 9, 16, 67, 76, 78, 187
 Finsterlin, Hermann 190
 Flechtner, Georg 34
 Frampton, Kenneth 130
 Freyberg, Dr. 121
 Friedman, Yona 190

Gaudí, Antonio 175
 Gay, Peter 71
 Geist, Jonas 131
 Giedion, Sigfried 21, 124, 125, 126, 127
 Ginzburg, Moisei J. 80, 123
 Goebbels, Joseph 72
 Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von 44
 Graeff, Werner 190
 Grönwald, Bernd 80, 189
 Gropius, Ise 34, 78, 88, 97, 104, 107, 108, 113, 169
 Gropius, Walter 7, 9, 11, 12, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21, 43, 44, 48, 60, 61, 64, 67, 69, 71, 76, 78, 87, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 104, 105, 107, 108, 110, 113, 117, 119, 120, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 139, 143, 154, 160, 161, 164, 173, 179, 182, 184, 187, 188, 189
 Grosz, George 99
 Grote, Ludwig 12
 Guévrékian, Gabriel 113

Habermas, Jürgen 125, 131
 Haesler, Otto 91, 187
 Häring, Hugo 128
 Harksen, Hans 161
 Hassenpflug, Gustav 143
 Haynisch 149
 Heine, Thomas Theodor 92
 Henn, Ewald 81
 Hesse, Fritz 12, 76, 91, 92, 96, 99, 107, 108, 116, 119
 Hilberseimer, Ludwig 71, 119
 Hirdina, Heinz 130
 Hirdina, Karin 81, 130, 131
 Hirz, Friedrich 9
 Hitchcock, Henry-Russell 69, 119, 125, 131
 Hitler, Adolf 72, 91, 92, 94, 95
 Hoeblin, Franz von 12
 Hofer, Carl 96
 Hoffmann, Hubert 76, 78
 Högg, Emil 120
 Honecker, Erich 80, 81

Huse, Norbert 129
 Hüter, Karlheinz 80

Itten, Johannes 21, 88, 89

Jencks, Charles 130
 Johnson, Louise 119
 Johnson, Philip C. 69, 119, 125, 131

Kähler, Gerd 131
 Kallai, Ernst 125
 Kaminski, Walter 145
 Kandinsky, Wassily 7, 11, 16, 20, 21, 48, 71, 72, 88, 89, 90, 95, 96, 97, 108, 110, 143, 178, 179, 187
 Karsten, W. 32
 Kaufmann, Emil 18
 Klee, Lily 17
 Klee, Paul 7, 16, 17, 72, 88, 89, 90, 95, 97, 99, 178, 179, 187
 Klotz, Heinrich 131
 Körner, Karl 34, 38
 Krajewski, Max 9, 167, 171
 Krejzar, Jaromir 115
 Kuball, Mischa 82
 Kühne, Lothar 81, 130
 Kun, Béla 88
 Kutschke, Christine 52

Landman 91
 Le Corbusier 18, 127, 131
 Ledoux, Claude-Nicolas 18
 Lengyel, Kalman 33
 Lenin 80
 Lensing, Jörg 152
 Leonard 196
 Levedag, Fritz 9
 Lewerentz, Sigurd 175
 Liebknecht, Kurt 79
 Lissitzky, Eliezer Markowitsch 123
 Lucas, G. 113
 Ludendorff, Erich 92
 Lüders 113
 Lurçat, André 113

Malevich, Kasimir 117
 Marcks, Gerhard 72, 88, 95
 Marx, Carl 76, 168
 Mentzel, Albert 103
 Merton, Robert 96
 Meyer, Adolf 18, 19
 Meyer, Hannes 7, 67, 72, 76, 87, 92, 93, 94, 95, 97, 98, 99, 104, 110, 125, 179, 187
 Meyer, Otto 97
 Meyer-Otten, Otto 107
 Michelangelo Buonarroti 126
 Mies van der Rohe, Ludwig 19, 67, 71, 74, 79, 91, 92, 96, 99, 100, 110, 119, 121, 127, 132, 179, 187
 Milde, Kurt 80
 Millet, Jean-François 100

- Modersohn-Becker, Paula 100
 Moholy, Lucia 8, 12, 17, 21, 25, 34, 94, 113, 193, 194, 196
 Moholy-Nagy, László 7, 11, 21, 25, 45, 49, 88, 89, 90, 94, 95, 96, 97, 100, 104, 124, 171, 173, 179, 187
 Monastirskaja, Ljuba 103
 Mowrer, Lilian T. 116
 Muche, Georg 7, 11, 92, 94, 95, 177, 187
- Neidenberger, Georg 76
 Neufert, Ernst 9, 16, 67, 73, 108
 Neuy, Heinrich 110
 Niegemann, Johann 103
 Niemeyer, Oscar 175
 Noesselt, Heinz 9
 Nolde, Emil 89
 Nonn, Konrad 120, 124
 Nonne-Schmidt, Helene 107, 108
 Nouvel, Jean 25
- Ostwald, Wilhelm 44
 Otto, Frei 187, 190
 Oud, Jacobus Johannes Pieter 113, 119
- Pahl, Pius 73
 Palladio 184
 Pannaggi, Ivo 116, 119
 Pap, Gyula 180
 Paul, Wolfgang 169, 189
 Paulick, Richard 7, 9, 161, 187
 Pazitnov, Leonid 129, 130
 Pechmann, Günther von 113
 Peiper, Tadeusz 117
 Peterhans, Walter 71, 144
 Peus, Heinrich 91, 119
 Pevsner, Nikolaus 126, 127
 Picasso, Pablo 127
 Platz, Gustav Adolf 124
 Poelzig, Hans 79
 Porten, v. d. 115
 Posener, Julius 123
 Preller, Friedrich 70, 104
 Przyrembel, Hans 144
 Püschel, Konrad 145, 149, 161, 189
- Radack, Rolf 76
 Rausch, Dieter 193, 195, 197, 199, 201
 Redslob, Dr. Edwin 92
 Reich, Lilly 71
 Reindl, Mathilde 200
 Renn, Ludwig 79
 Roeseler, Herman 108
 Roth 115
 Rowe, Colin 131
 Rudelt, Alcar 71, 106
- Schädlich, Christian 80, 189
 Schawinsky, Alexander (Xanti) 99, 104, 105, 108, 110
 Scheerbart, Paul 21
- Scheper, Hinnerk 44-64, 76, 95, 105, 143, 168
 Scheper, Lou 105, 107
 Schinkel, Karl Friedrich 18, 73, 131
 Schipke, Herbert 9
 Schlemmer, Oskar 7, 11, 25, 72, 88, 89, 95, 97, 98, 105, 110, 119, 139, 179, 180, 187
 Schmarsow, August 20
 Schmetzer, Wilhelm Stadtbaurat 113
 Schmidt, Dieter 129
 Schmidt, Hans 80
 Schmidt, Joost 48, 71, 78, 93, 95, 108, 152, 179, 180
 Schmitthenner, Paul 87
 Schneck, Adolf Gustav 113
 Schröter 113, 117
 Schulze, Helmut 145
 Schultze-Naumburg, Paul 74, 91, 93, 121
 Schwalacher, Nelly 117
 Schwarz, Rudolf 125
 Sedlmayr, Hans 128
 Siebenbrodt, Michael 52
 Simmel, Georg 23
 Slutzky, Robert 131
 Speer, Albert 73, 76, 147
 Spelsberg, Hanno 152
 Stalin, Josef 79, 80
 Stam, Mart 119
 Steinbach, Rudolf 128
 Stölzl, Gunta 95, 99, 104, 107
 Sturtzky, Bernhard 9, 161
- Tafari, Manfredo 130, 131
 Taut, Bruno 21, 87, 91, 92, 126, 190
 Taut, Max 113, 190
 Teige, Karel 117
 Tessenow, Heinrich 87
 Thies, Harmen 131
 Throll, Franz 9
 Tolziner, Philipp 145, 149
 Trau, Walter 9, 67
 Troost, Karl Ludwig 73
- Ulbricht, Walter 80
 Ursin, Max 76
- van de Velde, Henry 88, 177, 189
 van der Leeuw, Kees H. 119
 van der Vlugt, Leendeert C. 117
 van Kampen, Wilhelm 120
 Verbeetschick, Moise 103
 Vesnin, Alexander 80
 Vesnin, Leonid 80
 Vesnin, Victor 80
 Vogeler, Heinrich 100
 Volger, Hans 9
- Wagner, Martin 91
 Weill, Kurt 180
 Weininger, Andor 105, 107, 110
 Westheim, Paul 43, 123
- Wiegand, W. 32
 Wilhelm, Karin 116
 Wilk, Christopher 34
 Wingler, Hans Maria 67
 Wittwer, Hans 99
 Wölfflin, Heinrich 20
 Wolfe, Tom 94, 126, 130
 Worringer, Wilhelm 20, 21
 Wright, Frank Lloyd 127
 Wünsche, Konrad 131
- Yamawaki, Iwao 87
- Ždanov, Andrej 79
 Zervos, Christian 119